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proposition is either true or false, the answer being written in some eternal, ethereal book, though we do not (yet) know which answer it is. However, it was shown by Gödel and Cohen that neither the truth nor the falsity of the continuum hypothesis can be derived from the standard Zermelo-Fraenkel-Skolem axioms (and rules of procedure) of set theory. So to a formalist (or at least one who plays this particular Zermelo-Fraenkel-Skolem game) the continuum hypothesis is an undecidable proposition. Thus we find on page 225 the statement "Only in 1963 was it (the continuum hypothesis) finally settled" and on page 231 "there now exists a complete solution of the continuum problem" (meaning, in each case, that it was shown to be independent of the Zermelo-Fraenkel-Skolem axioms - this is the formalist speaking), while on page 236 we find "the truth of the continuum hypothesis remains undecided" (Platonist speaking). The Platonist's position on this question is considerably clarified on page 394.

I think that it is time for me to come into the open concerning my own position on these matters - though perhaps it was already clear from my introductory remarks. I am an unabashed and unrepentant Platonist! Thus I feel a glow of satisfaction when I read those passages where strong Platonist arguments are brought to bear against the formalist position (as is quite effectively done in certain places) and a corresponding (mild) irritation when, instead, a formalist viewpoint seems to be being adopted.

Perhaps the major instance of the latter occurs in the section on non-Cantorian set theory. The analogy is made with the development of non-Euclidean geometry. For many centuries Euclidean geometry was believed to be obviously "true" and the only kind of geometry imaginable. Only in the early nineteenth century did it become apparent that alternative, equally consistent geometries can be constructed. (There are some curious errors in the otherwise excellent account of these ideas given in this book. The claimed equivalence between various forms of Euclid's fifth postulate is actually invalid when the stated interpretation is made which allows Riemann's elliptic model. More serious is the authors' confusion between Riemann's elliptic model and the more general concept of Riemannian geometry, which leads to an incorrect expression for the metric - and triangle area - in the elliptic case.) The authors make the suggestion that Cantor's set theory may be like Euclidean geometry in that it is only one among several alternative equally consistent schemes. Like non-Euclidean geometries, there may be non-Cantorian set theories in which the continuum hypothesis is true and others in which it is false.

However, in my opinion the analogy is a misleading one. My reasons spring from an argument - the strongest argument yet made for Platonism and against formalism - which, rather surprisingly, is not given anywhere in the book. This argument rests on an interpretation of the famous incompleteness theorem of Gödel. (Perhaps the authors felt that there was no need for a discussion of Gödel's theorem since their book's stable-mate, Hofstadter's *Gödel, Escher, Bach*, devotes so much attention to this theorem - though, search as I will, I can find no clear expression of this necessary interpretation even in that book.) Gödel's theorem states, we recall, that any formalist system (axioms and rules of procedure) which is strong enough to contain arithmetic (with existential statements) must also contain well-defined propositions neither whose truth nor falsity can be established within the system - however - and this is my point - the very propositions which are thrown up by the Gödel procedure become obviously true statements about the integers that the formalist system is trying to describe. For from showing that there are undecidable propositions, Gödel's theorem shows that it is only the formalist which is inevitably inadequate. The Gödel procedure supplies a new mode of valid "proof" which lies outside whatever rules have been previously laid down as admissible by the narrow formalist view. (And, incidentally, herein lies one of the true

ly profound "mysteries" to which I referred at the beginning.)

I have never been able to understand how the strict formalist view can be continued to be upheld in the light of Gödel's devastating (but apparently still largely unappreciated) argument. In this book it is stated that Gödel was, indeed, himself a Platonist. But these reasons (presumably) for Gödel's viewpoint are not presented.

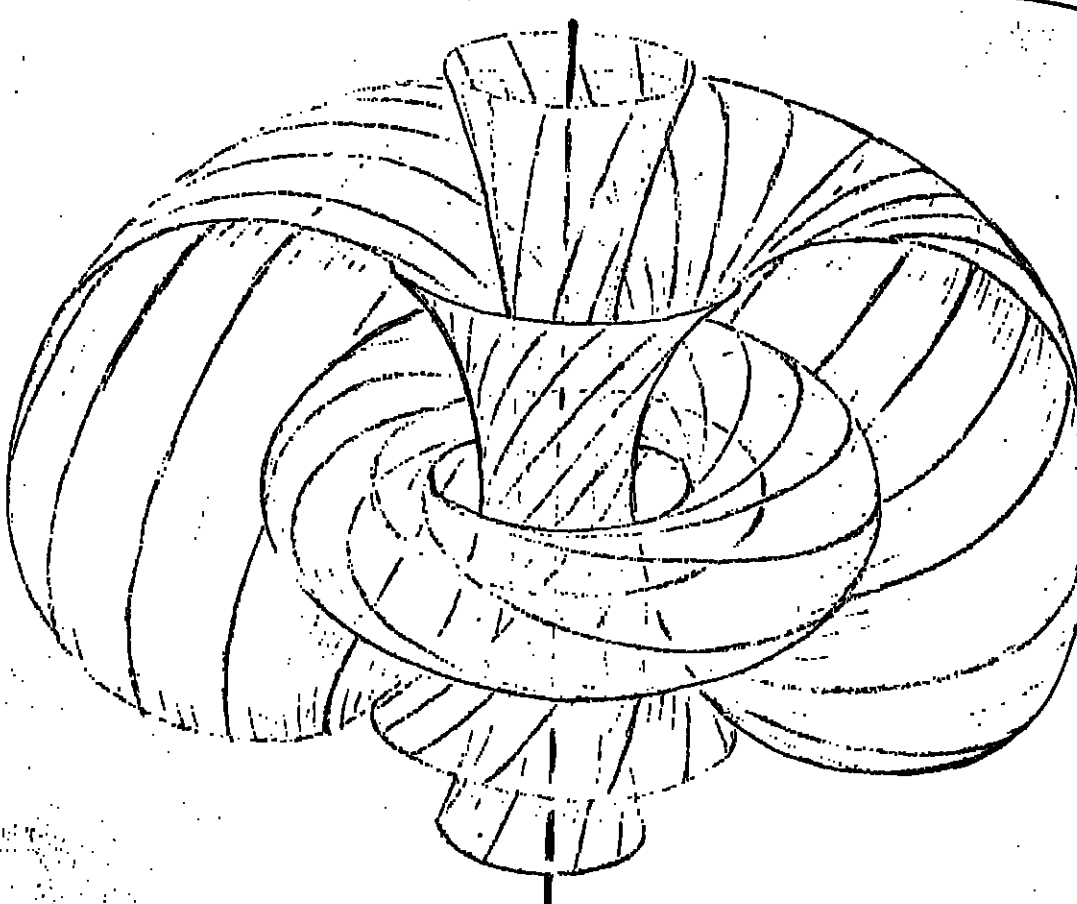
In my opinion the analogy between the original Gödel incompleteness theorem and the later Gödel-Cohen result is much more pertinent than the analogy between the latter and non-Euclidean geometries. We have no clear reason to believe, as yet, that non-Cantorian set theories can exist, when the Gödel procedures of his incompleteness theorem are admitted as intuitively valid (Platonist) methods of proof.

This is not to say that the Platonist viewpoint is itself free of difficulties. In fact there seems to be no completely satisfactory viewpoint, so far, on the foundations of mathematics. (Perhaps I should keep quiet about that!) The main difficulty, as I see it, is that Platonism supplies (as yet) no clear prescription for avoiding the paradoxes of set theory while the subjectivity and time-dependence of constructivism renders that third viewpoint totally unacceptable.

On the other hand, I do not regard the apparent difference in kind between the Platonic "existence" of mathematical concepts and the more familiar type of "existence" enjoyed by actual physical objects as an insurmountable obstacle to the Platonist view. For physical existence itself is not quite what it seems, and cannot be completely divorced from its Platonic counterpart. What could have a clearer physical existence than a commonplace object such as a table? Yet, as Eddington once so vividly emphasized, if we wish to predict accurately how that table will behave, not just if we thump it with our fists but also if we put a match with x-rays or with neutrons, then we must use increasingly abstract mathematical models to describe it. How are we best to understand the trans, quarks, electromagnetic field quanta and slightly curved (presumably quantized) space-time, of which the table is supposed to be composed, except in highly mathematical terms? Do we understand what it means for these supposedly physical ingredients to "exist" except in terms of that mathematics whose very (Platonic) existence is being questioned? It is clear that we are far from an understanding of such profound and nebulous matters. I wish merely to point out here that physical existence itself is something we do not understand. In fact we understand it less than mathematical existence, so to Platonist, such arguments against the Platonic ideal, as is done in this book, seems to be a dangerous game.

I hope I am not appearing to give undue weight to what are some very minor criticisms of an excellent and essentially unique book. Though it is technical in places (mainly in the middle of the book, getting presumably easier for the lay reader at both ends), these technicalities should not deter the lay reader. As the authors suggest in their preface: "Here the reader may feel like a guest at a family dinner" and should "judiciously and lightly push on". Likewise, the sensitive English reader will forgive them their occasional lapses into post-Watergate Americanisms, technical terms (such as the claim that "depth" in mathematics is essentially synonymous with "difficulty of proof" - which would seem as "shallow" as there are more real numbers than rationals), and mild historical unfaithfulness (such as the lack of mention of Eudoxus who, in the 4th century BC, resolved the "crisis" of Pythagorean discovery of irrationals, setting geometry and analysis on its odd misprised and lapses of definition). The uniqueness of this book drives, benefits, frustrates, and delights of the activities of the working mathematical community.

I hope it obtains the wide readership that it deserves.



This geometrical configuration of "Clifford parallel" projected into Euclidean space is an example of a mathematical structure which has both visual appeal and various applications within mathematics and physics. Drawn by Roger Penrose.

The philosopher's postbag

By K. H. D. Haley

E. S. de BEER (Editor):
The Correspondence of John Locke,
Volume 7
798pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £45.
0 19 824564 5

Of this correspondence, amounting to some 3,600 letters to and from John Locke, and constituting the largest collection attached to any English author of the seventeenth century, the volume under review contains 622, or over one-sixth, relating to the years 1700 to 1703 around his seventieth birthday. There are nearly twice as many letters as remain for the whole of his youth and middle age down to 1675, when he was forming his ideas; most readers would give a great deal if the reverse was true. Moreover, with a few exceptions such as the exchange of letters with Limborch, many of them are comparatively trivial, relating often to small commissions for a scholar in his retirement at Oates, Essex. They refer to the supply of oranges, cocoa, and even on one occasion two pairs of socks. They sometimes, even on other subjects, tempt the thought that they would be of little intrinsic importance - were they not written by, or addressed to, John Locke.

This, however, is an important qualification, and it means that they do help to form a picture of the great man in old age. Only for a few days could he stay in London; to the old long tiring to bed for a long period, and ear trouble. He was, as a result, confined to his room, and apart from his ailments, the comfort, as a result of his care and attention, and the company of his friends, and the company of visitors (who have a succession of affectionate friends he needed; not merely books but news of old friends and of the outside world. And many wrote asking for medical advice or for recommendations to Pembroke and others who could provide advancement.

The result covers a weird assemblage of subjects: colonial matters at

least as long as he served on the Board of Trade, the East India Company, the purchase of lottery tickets, Moroccan medals, the alleged influence of Pythagoras upon the Brahmins, barometers, the magnetic variation of the compass, remedies for earache, and Lady Masham's "pair of green spectacles in leather frames". His cousin's son, Peter King, answered an endless set of inquiries about possible investments, whether in mortgages or East India stock, for Locke's money; for him to neglect the businesslike administration and enhancement of what he had accumulated.

It is, indeed, with King that about a quarter of these letters are exchanged. Besides the investments and the family relationship, King became MP for Here Alston in 1701 and could meet his political interests. Of the continuance of Locke's Whiggery, there can be no doubt. He was alive to the French danger, and pressed upon King the idea that until the crisis following the death of Charles II of Spain was resolved, King ought to be in his place at Westminster instead of following his legal practice on the Western circuit. He wrote asking for a list of the members returned at the election of 1701. It is true that by October, 1702, he was writing to Furlly in Rotterdam that "whether it be satisfactory or dull old age... I have no curiosity to be prying, or to acquaint myself with the bias or bent of affairs, only I shall always be glad to hear of public events that tend to the prosperity and preservation of my country, and the security of my Europe", and "I have laid by the simplicity of troubling my head about things that I cannot give the least turn to one way or other... You chimney corner in some obscure hole. But this mood was not permanent, and even though ill health had forced him to give up the Board of Trade, he continued, for instance, to take a keen interest in the controversies over occasional conformity.

It seems that this was reflected more in Locke's conversations with King than his letters; for in the latter it was talk that he wanted rather than letters. "Under the blockade of my old enemy Winter" he is to be found appealing "your conversation would be a great relief to the prisoner"; and again, "You know I have not much conversation here but what is of the growth of the

place [Oates] which after so long living together doth not upon every assembly afford variety of new matter. Your coming therefore not in haste as to one with whom you have business but to let me have your company for some time (a thing you have never done yet) will be very acceptable". He wanted, as he said to "enjoy" King. The tone of much of his correspondence suggests indeed that for all his facility with the pen, he may have been better at talk; for there is a real atmosphere of affection to be found in letters from all classes of society; he was a querulous old invalid.

It is difficult to imagine anyone better equipped than E. S. de Beer in all his range of learning, to annotate the variety of topics covered here. A footnote on the Pointe du Marais may be considered typical but he does not obtrude his learning between the text and the reader, his comments are at once succinct, reliable and useful, and he nowhere pretends to know when the evidence is inadequate. Every misspelling, mispunctuation and deletion is recorded; one might say literally almost every mark upon the paper. Only the Greek accents have been silently corrected. It is difficult to imagine many readers needing to go behind these texts to the original, and even when these texts have been printed before, they gain by being printed in context, in chronological order, with annotations. It is appropriate, too, to express appreciation of the elegance and accuracy of Dr de Beer's translations of the correspondence in Latin with Limborch; perhaps sometimes he knows the exact shade of meaning of the Latin word employed better than the writers themselves. There cannot be many subjects more difficult than a discussion of the human will, carried on in Latin, with Locke basing himself on the English text of his Essay and Limborch first on Coste's French translation and then on Burdett's Latin translation. It is a not very satisfactory Latin translation of it, but a philosophical discussion presents no more difficulty to Dr de Beer as translator than the dating of a letter or the tracking down of an obscure reference.

Apart from the steadily rising price of this edition we can have no complaints about it in quality; we can only hope that Dr de Beer will long be spared to see the last volume through the press and to receive the many congratulations which will come his way.

The blossoming of the ultimate weed

By Andrew Motion

DUNCAN FALLOWELL and APRIL ASHLEY:
April Ashley's Odyssey
287pp. Cane, £8.50.
0 234 01849 3

"Strasbourg, Court of Human Rights at; suicide attempts; *Sunday Mirror*; surgery". An extract from April Ashley's index gives a good idea of her *Odyssey*. It is, she says, "very personal" in anatomical as well as emotional terms, and yet circumstances have conspired to make much of her life seem unreal to the point of remoteness. This is not simply because the facts of her transsexual life are unusual, but because obscure the scandal they created has been to cultivate a social world which is also pretty peculiar. The longer her celebrity has lasted, the more she has sought - until the last few years - to immerse herself in the (to most of us) exotic world of the Feckless Rich. Her intention, obviously, has been to discover some of the stability which money and titles seem to offer; the effect has been to unearth a phantasmagoria of snobs. "The kind of nobleman who appeals to me", she unblushingly admits, "is the 3rd Marquis of Hertford, who in 1848, the Year of Revolutions, could say without nuance, 'I have a place in Wales which I have never seen, but they tell me it's very fine. A dinner for twelve is served there every day... the butler eats it'."

The causes for this fixation are sympathetic, in a way, but the fixation itself usually seems extravagantly idiotic. So does the style in which

it is evoked. Between them she and Duncan Fallowell have more or less exactly captured the diction which certain actors have evolved as their own unmistakable language. It is camp, precious, hyperbolic, and punctuated with shrieks and giggles. On education, for instance: "My schooldays - such a torture. Those nuns, those priests, those hopeless teachers, those disgusting children! Or on a trip to Canada: "Canada. Brrrr! And quiet. Our northernmost call was Woodfibre, an isolated lumberjack settlement with one coffee bar, where, surprise, we took on timber." This sort of thing is an achievement of a kind, but it is hard to take for long. The reason for its appearance, however, is as easy to define as her social infatuation. Although the flashy superficialities cannot help inviting criticism, they also offer a protective covering. They help to obscure the outline of what April Ashley understandably feels to be a distinctive - and therefore exposed and vulnerable - personality, and lose her in a glittering mass of types.

Given these explanations for the *Odyssey's* ambience and tone, its excesses can be related to its main purpose: "to explain a little of the trials and traumas of changing sex. And when April Ashley is discussing these directly, she is much more straightforward. The urgency of her need to explain forces her to give up theatrical flourishes and winkings, and produce, at the centre of the book, a literary version of the tough pragmatism she must have needed in life. In essence, her *Odyssey* is not only very interesting, but touching and brave, and projects a personality of quite exceptional resilience. She was born a boy, George Jamieson, in a slum district of Liverpool in 1935, and being "the ultimate weed" was a target for bullying as soon as school

began: "Scarcely a day passed when I was not subjected to some barbarism by the local tough boys, so that early on there was forced upon me a sense of my own uniqueness." This was fostered by more than victimization. As an adolescent, George Jamieson's effeminate good looks showed no signs of disappearing, there was no trace of pubic hair on his body, and he felt radically unfitted for the demands of the stereotyped male world. But instead of shirking these demands, he opted for a career which he half hoped and half feared would solve his dilemma: he joined the merchant navy. In the short term it was a disaster; the aggressively macho taunts of his companions drove him to despair. At the same time, though, they helped to sharpen his sense of where his salvation lay: "I was convinced a monstrous mistake had been made and only my being a woman could correct it. There were no fantasies about dressing in such and such a way. I merely wanted to be whole."

Discharged, and back in London, the helplessness of his situation deepened until he attempted suicide. He was only saved by his own incompetence. But as well as bringing his predicament to a crisis, London also gave him the support of a sympathetic and similarly ostracized demi-monde. One friend, Rory, memorably advised him to concentrate less on his physical plight than on using his head to discover a reasonable solution: "If God had intended the genitals to be as important as the brain He'd have put a skull round them." The problem, however, was not so much what to do, but where, and how - sex changes in those days (the 1950s) were even rarer and more expensive than now. Proper medical studies of transsexualism were not carried out until the late

1960s, and in so far as the condition was generally acknowledged before that, it was only as a result of popular accounts like Nels Hoyer's *Man Into Woman* (1933), or sensationalized cases like Christine Jorgensen's. George Jamieson realized that if he was to have the operation at all, it was unlikely to be in England, so he left for Europe - and after working for several years in a cabaret in Paris, was given the address of a doctor in Casablanca. April Ashley's account of the surgery, and her resolutely painful recuperation, is emphatically matter-of-fact: "The operation lasted 7 hours and involved removal of the testes, surgery on the outer genitalia, and the construction of a vagina... The brilliance of Doctor Burou's technique was that he did this retaining the maximum nerve tissue and inverting it into a vaginal lining so that erogenous sensitivity was not destroyed."

And that, one might think, would be the beginning of that. The operation was a complete success, the confusions between transsexual proper and transvestism or homosexuality had been biologically resolved, the relationship between an internal choice of sex and external appearance had been agreed, and George Jamieson went back to England (as himself, or as Toni April (his Parisian stage name) but as April Ashley. For as long as the story of her past was kept from the press, it was a triumphant return: modelling jobs galore, the Feckless Rich in abundance, and a constant flow of name-droppers whose names could be (and are) constantly dropped. But once the story broke, which it soon did, her life threatened to grind to a halt. What saved her at the time turned out, eventually, to be a catastrophe: she got married. For temper-

amental rather than any other reason, she and her husband almost immediately separated, and the only terms on which she could rejoin her preferred social world were not easy. She was branded as a freak, a notorious oddity. The energy she devoted to freeing herself from this stigma was characteristically enormous, but the price she paid was high. It meant suffering numerous rebuffs, assiduously seeking out the right people, and dedicatedly following fashion in order to remain in everyone's good books. But in the 1960s much of the ground she had won was taken from her. When her divorce proceedings went through court, they involved her in humiliations which once again damaged her sense of stable identity. Because the court decided that she had not been a woman at the time of her marriage, it officially declared her to be an outsider - a third sex without many rights and privileges.

For what must have seemed like the umpteenth time, she set herself to work creating another society - by running a restaurant in London and wooing the rich and famous to dine there. In a sense, it was the apotheosis of her affair with the good life, but its success was comparatively short. Ill, impoverished, and unable to sustain the pace she set herself, she moved to Hay-on-Wye, where she lives now. In many cases, such a change might suggest a retreat; in this one it looks more like the beginning of a new campaign. Although there is a good deal of sadness in the *Odyssey's* final pages, they pose a question which, for all its schmalzy phrasing, sounds like the beginning of independent self-reliance: "When you place your sense of identity in the reflections you see in other people's eyes, what happens when the people go away?"

Dressed to mislead

By Lorna Sage

ALISON LURIE:
The Language of Clothes
266pp. Heinemann, £10.
0 434 43 906 1

Robinson Crusoe, alone on his island, determined to salvage his identity, has three priorities: ink, gunpowder, and clothes. Gulliver, among the Houyhnhnms, tries desperately to conceal from his noble, nude, reasonable, stallion Master that his clothes come off. When they do, he's revealed as a disgusting Yahoo, vicious, weak and shapeless. It's no accident either that Swift's Houyhnhnms have no language of written signs. There is an oral culture, with no word for lying. When we talk of the "language" of clothes, as Alison Lurie does in this book, we are talking, really, about a literate language (for example, fashion) - a language that is intensely unreasonable, designed for lying, and essential for self-love, or even for self-torture.

It seems fitting, therefore, that as a novelist of manners, Alison Lurie should confess herself also "an amateur in the history of costume". She dismisses from the beginning the notion that clothing is or could ever be merely useful, and the twin idea that fashion is only a commercial conspiracy. Our clothes express our native craziness.

Imagine for instance a transparent sequined evening blouse over a quilted Victorian cotton petticoat and black rubber galoshes. (I have observed this getup in real life; it was worn to a lunch party at a famous Irish country house.)

This (assuming it was), is perhaps, more a character for Carolee Blackwood. Ms Lurie's own fiction tastes tend towards what one might call the routinely bizarre: for example, the possible ritual procedures for disposing of a garment once borrowed from an ex-lover;

An especially refined form of black magic is to give the garment away to the Salvation Army, in the hope that it will soon be worn by a drunkard and an incontinent bum - ideally, someone where your former lover will see and recognise it.

The language analogy highlights both the private or paranoid functions of clothes, and their (ambivalent) communality. One of the main points here is that "change" in fashion very often turns out to mean borrowing the style of the other sex, or of another generation. Ms Lurie is of course interested in the sexual trade in clothes, and in the fact that (transvestites and Scotsmen notwithstanding) it casts women as the borrowers, but she's more riveted (and disturbed) by the thought that female "liberation" from elaborate and constricting costumes - whether in 1810, with the advent of simple muslin frocks and thin pumps, or in the 1960s with the miniskirt - seems to have taken the form of dressing like a toddler. Fashion may be, as she says (conjuring a grey vision of a phalanx of Communist-bloc athletes), "free speech", but it gives a very ironic twist to freedom:

the well-dressed liberated woman is encouraged, for instance, to be sleek and refined on the job, glowingly energetic on holiday, sweetly domestic at home... irresistibly sexy in the presence of... her "spouse-equivalent"... personality itself has become an adjunct of Conspicuous Waste.

Male uniformity, in the form of the sack suit that "deforms the athlete and disguises the weakling" (shades of Swift) seems almost enviable - a version of integrity ("Men... are not supposed to have more than one personality, one real self").

This adds up to a fairly bleak view of recent "advances" towards unsexed clothing. Ms Lurie suspects we're on the brink of "new" corseted, hobbled decade. However, her account of the past two hundred years has ambivalence she doesn't really do justice to. The nineteenth century seems to

have two quite different scenarios, in one of which women "grow up" from childish muslin to become lavishly upholstered late Victorian Junos, who take up a lot of space in drawing rooms, but in public life; while in the other they are seen as progressively corseted and weighed down into immobility. The contradiction becomes obvious when you unite these plots in the person of a fiercely corseted suffragette. Bondage by clothes may have more perverse potentialities than Ms Lurie is willing to allow.

And this, really, is the trouble with *The Language of Clothes* - that Alison Lurie is not the kind of fiction-writer who relishes gothic or speculative idioms, and you probably need to be to make sense of the fantasies that - as the book's illustrations splendidly demonstrate - transform us moment by moment. There is no photograph of the author to show where she stands just now, but her section on "Bohemian Black" ("One of the longest-lasting styles of this century... basic garment: a black turtleneck sweater paired with a full black or coloured skirt") is more than usually approving, and the "Fashion and Sex" chapter confides that "simple black underthings are often worn by thoughtful, intellectual women who take sex very seriously". Her sub-text is austere, and superior, and in the end rather impatient with our theatrical neuroses. Secretly, she is a bluestocking.

Letters from Collette (214pp. Virago Press, £6.95, 0 86068 252 8) selected and translated by Robert Phelps has recently been published. The letters cover the years 1902 - 52, her chief correspondents are Marguerite Moreno, Hélène Picard and Renée Hamon. Occasional letters are addressed to such famous contemporaries as Francis James, Francis Poulenc, Maurice Ravel, Marcel Proust and François Mauriac. Phelps comments in his introductory note: "There is good gossip and intelligent malice, and redoubtable tenderness of every page; and, above all, *par de littérature*."

May Books

Fiction

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Stephen Fay

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Anthony Olcott

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By Anthony Holden

DIANA TRILLING:

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341pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.85.
0 231 10822 5

"When I read about crimes passionnelles in the papers", says one of Anthony Powell's characters, "I am struck not by the richness of their emotions, but by their desperate poverty. On the surface, the people concerned may seem to live with intensity. Underneath it is an abject egotism and lack of imagination." George Orwell took a similar line, with due irony, when reviewing an account of the wartime Cleft Chin Murder for *Tribune*; the case was "pitiful and sordid... interesting only from a sociological and perhaps a legal point of view". Lamenting the passing of such stylists as Joseph Smith, who played "Nearer, My God, to Thee" on the harmonium while his wife was drowning in the next room, he complained "You never seem to get a good murder nowadays".

Orwell was protesting on behalf of the pious and slippered Englishman at leisure, who liked to digest his Sunday lunch with a dash of *News of the World* gore. The demise of the death penalty seems to have somewhat diminished his appetite, reducing even such spectaculars as the Yorkshire Ripper trial to their property sordid dimensions. Americans, however, suffer no such dearth of material. The reintroduction of execution in some states has provided cannon-fodder for such authors as Norman Mailer, the murderous small-town psychopath celebrated at lucrative length by Truman Capote long before he became a movie cliché. Earlier this year the trial of Claus von Bulow, convicted of injecting his wife with insulin, held high East Coast society in thrall. Nothing in recent years, however, can compare with the astonishing appeal to Everyman (and, more particularly, Everywoman) of the case of Mrs Jean Harris, headmistress of a chic Virginia ladies college, convicted last year of the second degree murder of her lover, Dr. Herman Tarnower, a fashionable New York physician also celebrated as the author of the best-selling *Scarisdale Medical Diet Book*. Just as Britain's own Moors Murder trial in 1966 drew such writers as Pamela Hansford Johnson and Evelyn Williams to authorial seats on the press benches (and the Ripper trial Piers Paul Road), so we are now promised a glut of literary ruminations on the mind and motivation of Mrs Harris. The first comes from Diana Trilling, who has hitherto distinguished herself in altogether different fields.

Mrs Trilling, to her credit, is herself not surprised by the mysterious forces which drew her to Westchester for the trial; she spends much of her prologue and epilogue — the bulk of the book is a day-by-day courtroom diary engaged in agonized self-justification. On slow days in court, she tells us, her new-found friends in the press box would turn to her for interviews about her interest: "I'd been asked, not too unkindly, whether it wasn't ghastly, an exploitation, to make a book out of so terrible a personal tragedy. I don't recall how I replied... Yet 200 pages earlier she has already told us at some length that in response to just such inquiries she would express 'fascination' in 'the kind of world that Dr Tarnower and Mrs Harris inhabited together and what happened between them for their relationship to ensue in such tragedy'. She launches, indeed, into a protracted wall about the state of contemporary fiction and its inadequacy in the face of the complexities of our contemporary lives.

It had once been the high function of literature to deal with just such material, to acquaint us with our social variegation and our human complexity, provide us with the surrogates of our known and un-

known strengths, terrors, perils... But literature no longer gave us this instruction. It had become abstract, remote from the objects of our immediate personal and social curiosity.

The world of the Harris-Tarnower drama, she argues, was by and large the same as that of readers of books: it was the world of the educated middle-class. If its two chief characters were more ambitious or successful than the rest of us, this merely gave them an advantage that had always been given to the protagonists of drama; the traditional hero or heroine always had more to lose in defeat than commonplace people had. Their emotional histories nevertheless fed our natural curiosity about ourselves.

So why, were we to accept her thesis, aren't people writing novels about all this any more?

Love and sexual passion, honour, money, envy, jealousy, greed, death, greatness and meanness of spirit, the anguishing anatomy of class, the major themes of the novel were disappearing from literature to find their home in television, whose falsifications steadily weakened our understanding of life even while we boasted our superiority to its influence.

So Dallas has superseded Dickens, and a contemporary Dostoevsky must now seek his Raskolnikov down at the Old Bailey. It's a thin self-defence against the charge Mrs Trilling levels at herself later in the same paragraph: "To write a book about someone's murder was to make capital out of another person's tragedy." But the die is cast, the thesis persists, and by the time of Mrs Trilling's coda Mrs Harris "belongs to the novel in the way that Emma Bovary does, or Anna Karenina. The harsh truth, apart from the fact that Mrs Trilling is neither Flaubert nor Tolstoy, is that Anthony Powell was right all along: the Harris-Tarnower saga is one of 'abject egotism and lack of imagination'".

The facts, insofar as they can be summarized, are these. On the night of March 10, 1980, the fifty-six-year-old headmistress of the Madeira School in MacLean, Virginia, just

outside Washington, drove the 500 or so miles north to the home of her lover, apparently intent on suicide. The sixty-seven-year-old doctor had transferred his affections, after fourteen years of world travel and proxy domestic bliss, to his thirty-five-year-old secretary. She was going to have a final chat with him, then shoot herself.

Mrs Harris did not prove too welcome when she entered the doctor's bedroom. He was asleep, and asked her to leave so that he might remain so. The pistol was drawn and there was a struggle, during which Tarnower suffered four fatal gunshot wounds. Mrs Harris was driving away as the police arrived, summoned by a servant; she led them back inside to the spectacle of the doctor dying on the floor between his bed and the "guest bed" he kept beside it. The headmistress argued that his death was accidental; neither the investigating authorities nor, in the end, the jury believed her.

I was living in Washington at the time, and can testify to the popular obsession with the case in that already scandal-ridden town. Its universal appeal, and its capacity to provoke fierce domestic and social arguments, lie in the suggestion that Mrs Harris was some kind of avenging angel acting for womankind, settling centuries of scores by at last cutting down Polygynic Men — and, moreover, at the scene of his crimes, in his bedroom. "She was not thought to be a criminal," Mrs Trilling observes, "since she had acted rightly and on behalf of all women." The same society had recently been shaken by the murders of John Lennon and a fashionable Washington doctor, Michael Halberstam (brother of the writer, David) on their front doorsteps. But the Harris case became a veritable archetype, its protagonist a martyr to some perverted subcurrent of Feminism.

It is clear, whatever else she may say, that this was Mrs Trilling's driving force. Her opening words confess that she approached the project "in a spirit of partisanship"; my initial response was one of unqualified sympathy for the headmistress. As the trial proceeded that sympathy waned, but more in the face of Mrs Harris's Lady Macbeth-like lack of remorse rather than for any sense that a man had been unjustly de-

prived of life. A self-conscious, forced female sensibility dominates the book. When random examples are required of middle-class respectability unbending itself, they turn out to be Edith Wharton and Vita Sackville-West; the most instructive suicide case is that of Marilyn Monroe; a Stendhal heroine, Mina de Vengeli, is called in evidence that women don't use guns: "Her ardour was too strong for her sex, and hers was a masculine heroism." The only man cited as any kind of social parallel, in a passage mulling about people killing the things they love, is Oscar Wilde. "Was Mrs Harris a female victim, as she thinks?" asked Mrs Trilling. Yes, I guess she was, in the limited sense of having yielded to a sex more privileged than her own. And a final bubbling for mindless masculinity: "People aren't solved. Even women aren't to be solved."

There is no denying, and it is amply chronicled here, that Dr Tarnower appears to have been a high-spirited, unrepentant man, whose behaviour provoked fierce domestic and social arguments, lie in the suggestion that Mrs Harris was some kind of avenging angel acting for womankind, settling centuries of scores by at last cutting down Polygynic Men — and, moreover, at the scene of his crimes, in his bedroom. "She was not thought to be a criminal," Mrs Trilling observes, "since she had acted rightly and on behalf of all women." The same society had recently been shaken by the murders of John Lennon and a fashionable Washington doctor, Michael Halberstam (brother of the writer, David) on their front doorsteps. But the Harris case became a veritable archetype, its protagonist a martyr to some perverted subcurrent of Feminism.

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At the last William Hazlitt, writing of the 1750s case of Eugene Aram, offers the most succinct judgment on Mrs Harris's culpability: "The very coolness, subtlety and circumspection of his defence... prove that he was unconsciously of the crime." She certainly, it seems, managed to convince her defence lawyer of her innocence, for all the wrong reasons, and he nearly managed to convince the jury, out-of-his-depth Westchester attorney, well drawn by Mrs Trilling, so the class argument, "Aurore's worst mistake was to assume that Mrs Harris was so indisputably a lady that in itself this was virtually enough to win her case for her. Aurore appeared to be convinced that no one could convict anyone as 'class' as Mrs Harris of murder, and he was almost right." I cannot think of a less likely analogue than Dr Tarnower for Jay Gatsby, but Daisy Buchanan is invoked by Mrs Trilling to make a telling indictment: "Along with the ability and permission to make social distinctions, we lose our ability to make moral distinctions." That this should be true of a bluestocking headmistress, symbol of chaste community propriety, gave the case its especial edge.

Mrs Trilling closes, again on behalf of the Daughters of the American Revolution, by disagreeing with the verdict: "I had not been on Mrs Harris's jury. I could not have voted as it did." Anguished by the prospect of so evidently worthy a woman languishing in jail, her closing sentence offers the ultimate in anti-climatic redemption: "Her gifts of mind may now be put to use as they never were before. There is work to be done in the sphere of prison education, serious work of a kind for which she has the training, energy and intelligence. She may now be splendid in a way that she never knew how to be or dared to be."

From one institution of learning to another, this time not as headmistress but as head girl. As she goes cheerfully about her duties let us hope, within Mrs Trilling, that Mrs Harris "may also find much emotional comfort in being punished for her hidden anger at her lover." It is a solace pretty conclusively denied Dr Tarnower.

society must therefore at times be denied. It is in the sentencing of those convicted that efforts to do justice become more pronounced (and difficult), but McBarnet does not extend her enquiries far into these regions.

On the subject of summary courts and their correspondingly summary justice, she offers little more than withering cross-fire. Describing them as "theater without audiences", she rules out any possibility of their conforming to the traditional ideology of justice, which "they blatantly ignore every day". It is a remarkable fact, however, that in practice only a tiny proportion of summary convictions become the subject of appeal, even though legal aid is more readily available in these courts. Perhaps there is an underlying sense that even though the lower courts may lack the ritual, pomp and sophistication of the higher ones, being dealt with by one's peers in itself carries an idea of justice.

It is not to undermine the importance of this work to say that, while raising many questions about our system of criminal justice, it fails to offer many solutions. In England and Wales we await a Home Office decision on what is to be done with the Phillips Commission's Report. Meanwhile, however, we should not overlook the very important work being done by the Criminal Law Revision Committee, and the fact that, given the way our common law works, there are always opportunities for redressing defects in our system of criminal justice.

Life with the Laureate

By Claire Tomalin

JAMES O. HOGE (Editor):
Lady Tennyson's Journal
401pp. Charlottesville: University
Press of Virginia. \$24.95.
0 8139 0876 0

Marriage to Robert Browning cured Elizabeth Barrett of the invalidism that had made her unable to leave her bedroom for many years. Marriage to Alfred Tennyson had some of the reverse effect on Emily. The wedding took place in 1850, when she was thirty-seven; she had known him for twenty years, from their first meeting in a Lincolnshire house when he greeted her with the question "Are you a dryad or a maid?", and loved and been engaged on and off to him for a large part of that time. Within a few years of their marriage she developed a mysterious weakness of the spine which restricted her ability to move about unaided for the rest of her life. Fortunately she had first borne three sons, the eldest stillborn, the others healthy, without apparent difficulty; indeed she speaks in a letter of 1855 of giving little Hallam and Lionel rides on her back. And until 1874 she insisted on acting as her husband's secretary, a formidable task; then her weakness extended to her arm, so that she was unable to continue.

Emily's weakness took another dramatic turn when Hallam married at the age of thirty-two. She managed to get to the church in her bath chair, clothed in white samite, but then collapsed. The honeymoon was abruptly ended after two days so that Hallam could come home again to look after his parents, although their household was already staffed with a butler, cook, housekeeper, lady's maid, several parlour and kitchen maids, indoor page, gardeners, coachman and grooms (all ruled over by an iron hand by Lady Tennyson). Five years later Hallam's bride noted that she had not dined alone with her husband since the two-day honeymoon.

The poet himself had always been a hypochondriac. He took many "cures" before his marriage, was terrified of blindness and epilepsy, suffered from gout, palpitations, a fluctuating resolve to give up smoking and constant trouble with his teeth, which necessitated, after his marriage, frequent trips to London to have them seen to. Edward Lear, impatient of Alfred's self-absorption, noted Emily's obvious frailty of appearance during the first decade of their marriage, and recorded her pathetic "please God, if I live one or two years more." In the event she, like Alfred, lived to eighty-three.

Lear, who found Tennyson increasingly trying as the years went by, was deeply devoted to Emily: "I am assuredly a most complete slave to her." He believed no other woman in all this world could live with him for a month. "And most of Tennyson's friends loved and admired her. Jowett considered — or at any rate told the boys' tutor Dakyns he considered — that 'among great women she stood somehow apart in greatness'. He credited her further with being her husband's best critic (although the critical remarks in her journal are confined to words such as 'delightful' or 'awe-inspiring'). The theologian William Ward said her conversation reminded him of that of Cardinal Newman 'in its sincerity and simplicity'; and Watts-Dunton described her as a 'brilliant and stimulating' talker. Her 'infectious pliancy' was particularly welcomed by admirers of the poet who feared his morbid, black-blooded aspect; even if she did not often actually steer him into church, she appeared to hold him on a steady orthodox course (she did not, for instance, encourage his dabblings in 'puritanism'). He repeated to Jowett her remark that 'every time I prayed she saw the face of God plainly upon her, a most un-Tennysonian idea. A charming journal entry made soon after they had moved into Farringford on the Isle of Wight suggests that they accommodated

their respective attitudes to religious observance very well:

Went to Communion & afterwards in the garden heard A.'s low whistle & found him lying by the strawberry bed under the trees nearest the wall. We walk in the fields. A beautiful day.

Saintly, spiritual and a perfect wife was the general verdict; but there were a few dissenting voices. Tennyson's brother Frederick spoke of Emily's "worldliness" disparagingly. Edward Fitzgerald, one of Tennyson's closest friends before his marriage, also regarded her as "devious" in managing, and felt her snobbishness and over-refinement had harmed Tennyson's genius; he would have done better, thought Fitzgerald, with an old housekeeper, like Molière. Elizabeth Barrett Browning also felt that Tennyson was "too much indulged. His wife is too much his second self; she does not criticize enough." Tennyson, of course, loathed criticism and threw on flattery, and of his gratitude of his wife there is no question. He asserted it many times, when he said that "the peace of God" came into his life as he stood at the altar with her; when he wrote "The Daisy", with its curious undertone of melancholy ("O love we two shall go no longer/To lands of summer across the sea"); and when he addressed the wonderful nine-line love poem "June Heather and Bracken" to her after forty years of marriage.

Her journal, here printed in full for the first time although it has been used by all the major biographers, seems to have been written neither as a literary exercise nor as a form of self-revelation or exploration, but as a record of the daily life of Tennyson's household, with his activities, visits and reading taking pride of place. If she kept a diary before her marriage, it has not survived; and what has survived covers the first twenty-four years of her marriage only, up to her collapse of 1874. Even this is no more than a version made here and there from the original, which she then destroyed for her son Hallam when he was working on his memoir of his father in the 1890s. What we read now has been through a double filter, first of Emily's original discretion and then of her desire to sanctify her memories of her husband.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the journals as they now stand is the uniform note of approval and appreciation that runs through them: "most kind", "so kind", "very kind letter", "all very kind", "all so kind and friendly", "pleasant visit", "delightful walk", "delightful time", "good and gentle and loving", "very pleasant day", "very fine and very beautiful" — the words of gentle praise come on almost every page, and occasionally one longs for some thing, if not malicious, at least less than ideal. Even a funeral (in this case that of her mother-in-law) elicits the elevating comment "one feels a feeling that it is some high and holy thing." It is hard to believe that even the most saintly person enjoys everything or likes everyone quite so much; presumably Emily remained silent about the others, or organized her life vigorously to avoid having to encounter them. She insists on the which she then destroyed for her son Hallam when he was working on his memoir of his father in the 1890s. What we read now has been through a double filter, first of Emily's original discretion and then of her desire to sanctify her memories of her husband.

Her passionate, possessive devotion to Hallam and Lionel, which runs through the journals touchingly, may have owed something to memories of her own childhood. In a short memoir compiled for Hallam in her last year she wrote "My life before marriage was in many ways sad". Her mother died when Emily was three, leaving her the eldest of three daughters, and her beloved father never remarried. An aunt Betsy brought in to care for them was brutally unkind, and has the distinction of being the one person so despised by Emily (like prickles, she suggests) that they accommodated

needles, made them wear dunce caps, beat their hands with a riding whip and once battered Emily's head against a door). And despite the loving and excellent education and companionship of her father, and the fortifications of religion, the long Mariana years waiting for marriage must have been bleak.

So the achievement of marriage, home and family was supreme for her: and marriage to a poet, for a girl nurtured on Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Goethe. But she was domestic, not adventurous. The journals record travels in England and on the continent in some detail, but it is always clear that she relished being at home with her husband and children more than the days spent in the simple activities of gardening, the evenings in reading aloud, in which Alfred took up the role of her teacher. She would have liked to educate the boys entirely at home (she had hated boarding school). "I am happy teaching them. (What a pity this cannot last)" she wrote in the journal. She prolonged their special childhood by keeping them in archaic clothes and delaying their first haircut. When their hair was cut at last, she and Alfred planted some of the precious locks in the flower beds at Farringford. The journal describes the pious sending away of Lionel to Dr Hunt of Hastings, but it is only from an editorial footnote that we learn the reason: he stuttered. Later, his mother wrote to him at school urging him not to drink beer or read novels.

A great charm of the journal is Emily's sharing in Tennyson's rapt observation of the natural world. She notices how the snowdrops vary from year to year, speaks of "thrushes mad with joy" in March, of seeing a white owl in the ilex; of Alfred "covered with sweet golden dust" after a walk through the wild flowers in May; or of "a snail on the drawing room window." We watch the blood flow like a lake smoke from head to tail. She describes an eclipse of the sun in June 1860:

The sky blackish like a clear moonlight sky. The clouds wonderfully beautiful, dark towards the horizon, white higher except that now & then about the sun they are

amber. The gulls fly slowly & heavily & there is a sleepy light over down & sea & cape.

As the years go by, these observations grow scantier and are replaced by more listing of visitors; but they do not disappear, and they suggest a deep bond of common interest between the poet and his wife in (as a later poet put it)

Celestial recurrence,
The day the flowers come,
And when the birds go.

Her observations about people are less inspiring. The boys' first tutor, Henry Dakyns is of course "so kind and pleasant and so intelligent looking" (later tutors are nebulous or non-existent, and the reader may recall that, according to Robert Martin's biography of Tennyson, Emily sometimes forgot to pay them their wages). Queen Victoria, visited at Osborne after her widowhood, is "beautiful" with a "small and child-like face" and "one feels that the Queen is a woman to live and die for". Garibaldi looks "very noble powerful and sweet... altogether Elizabethan age. His manner simple and kind" and she adds the delicious remark that "A.T. advised the General not to talk politics in England". Her own political comment is confined to noting that she and Alfred were "afraid" when Gladstone made a speech recommending an extended franchise.

Tennyson relished and relied on this profoundly conventional and old-fashioned nature. He did not like fast or assertive women and, although he read aloud freely enough to Emily, told her (for instance) that he could not read the whole of *Troilus and Cressida* to her. A.J. Symonds spoke of her "monastic" look; her purity pleased Alfred, and her physical weakness, which meant he had to wheel her about in a little cart on most of their "walks", and conducts much of his social life on his own, does not seem to have disturbed him. Each evidently revered the other with reason: Emily allowed him the precious right of a writer to be lazy, by relieving him of all necessity to organize his life; and her nature obviously found its fulfilment in self-sacrifice.

The philosophic paragon

By Robert Bernard Martin

JACK KOLB (Editor):
The Letters of Arthur Henry Hallam
841pp. Columbus: Ohio State
University Press. \$45.
0 8142 0300 0

For more than sixty years after his death the two most famous living Englishmen could find only one thing on which to agree, the brilliance of Arthur Hallam. Gladstone claimed that Hallam had more natural gifts than anyone else he had ever met, and more simply Tennyson said "He was as near perfect as a mortal man can be." The truth is, however, that the two men were engaged in those six decades in quiet but intense fighting as to which of them had been more intimate with Hallam, which suggests that whatever they might say, personal attraction had as much to do with the matter as mere intellect. But charm is even harder to recapture, or explain than intelligence, so that he is still a minor mystery in literary history. There is no point in questioning the joint judgment of his two best friends, but the surviving evidence doesn't go far to explain the intensity of their feelings. If he hadn't been embroiled in *In Memoriam*, it would probably be impossible today to distinguish Hallam from hundreds of other undergraduates who died or otherwise failed to fulfil their early promise.

Hallam had most of the advantages of birth. His father was the historian, Henry Hallam, his mother

came from the minor aristocracy, and he was brought up in a cultivated and wealthy home where intellect and discussion of serious matters were taken for granted as natural adjuncts to formal education. By the time he went to Eton, Arthur Hallam was already at ease in the kind of discourse that equally bright boys like Gladstone took years to master.

There were, however, disadvantages to his upbringing that were less immediately apparent. Seven of the eleven original children of the Hallams died very young, and the remainder of his father's hopes for an intellectual heir had been centred on Arthur, so that the boy was pushed along faster than was good for him. His early letters show that, like John Stuart Mill before him, he was better developed intellectually than emotionally. By seven he was proficient in French and two years later he had mastered Latin. At Eton he suffered from ill health that prevented him from taking part in games, but he threw his formidable energy into debating and the Society; he also became known as the best poet in the school, having achieved everything that intelligence could accomplish without the aid of talent. He was generally regarded as the most promising boy of his day, and he became the centre of an intellectual coterie that included Gladstone, who seems to have had an adolescent infatuation with him.

After such a start, Hallam's academic record at Cambridge was disappointing, but the blossoming of his emotions is indicated by the change in the manner of his correspondence. From Eton his surprisingly adult letters about political gossip and manoeuvring are written

Self-sacrifice is not the mode of the weak. Emily's physical frailty went, as we have seen, with a determined willpower. Watts' painting and drawing of her show a frailly beautiful, spiritual-looking but also steely face. The profile is very fine, skin tightly drawn across nose and cheekbones, rather belying Carlyle's description of her as a "freckly round-faced woman without shadow", but not his other phrase that she was "sick without a disorder". The appeal of sickness as a weapon in imposing your will upon the world is that it works without confrontations. Everyone is kind and delightful about the sick woman while she preserves her own like a tiger. In some ways she truly felt herself to be one with the great poet, as, for instance, when she (a talented musician herself) comments joyfully that Alfred has been at the Handel Festival in London:

It has been one of the desires of my life to hear *The Messiah* grandly performed. Delight that it should have been fulfilled in him.

She was so pleased with this absurd notion that it occurred in both the journal and a letter. But to her evidently it was not absurd, any more than her referring to Tennyson as Him (with a capital H) after his death. She questioned neither his greatness nor her service, and had her reward from that simplicity.

It is surprising that the journal has not been published before but this is a pleasant, serviceable edition with useful notes and a handful of good illustrations. Two small errors should be corrected in future editions. A footnote marries Leslie Stephen to Julia Jackson in 1867, whereas in fact he married Minnie Thackeray then and only in 1878 married Julia (now Duckworth) after both had been re-married. The other mistake occurs in the introduction, where James Joyce suggests that Emily's letter of March 7, 1866 was celebrating the proposal to give degrees to women at Oxford, whereas in fact it is clearly approving the university's refusal to do so. It was not a mountain height Emily had ever wished to scale herself, but if she had, she had come down from it fifty years earlier.

In a prosy, often hortatory style that betrays the rigidity of his attitudes. After the beginning of his friendship with the Apostles, and Tennyson in particular, the Cambridge letters achieve a freedom and relaxation that previously eluded him. Even so, the marks remain of the conscientious effort at composition about which Tennyson complained, and the surviving letters hardly support the present editor's claim for their "careless grace". As Jack Kolb says, Hallam applies to his letters as well as his poetry. It is improbable that his many readers will pick up this volume for simple pleasure rather than for specific information about Tennyson, Gladstone, or the Apostles, and it will no doubt be used primarily as a reference book.

Friendships were important to Hallam, but these letters indicate how inconstant he could be, apparently withdrawing his intimacy capriciously when another man failed to measure up to his own stern standards. William Farr, to whom he had been close at Eton, was dropped after he and Hallam went to Cambridge: "His mind seems pitifully vacant; his talents, and wit, smouldering day by day." And he could look upon the decay of a friendship with an icy eye; to Richard Monckton Milnes he wrote, apparently with no awareness that his letter might be offensive: "I am not aware, my dear Milnes, that in that lofty sense, which you are accustomed to attach to the name of Friendship, we ever were, or ever could be friends." When he heard that William Brookfield believed that Hallam had been cool to him, he wrote: "I assure you it never was my

Proceeding to prosecution

By John C. Alderson

DOREEN J. MCBARNET:
Conviction
Law, the State and the Construction
of Justice
182pp. Macmillan. £20.
0 333 25536 4

Doreen McBarnet takes on a difficult task in *Conviction — Law, the State and the Construction of Justice*; the differences between the English and Scottish legal systems come as a surprise to most non-lawyers, and to combine comments on both in the same narrative is like trying to ride two horses at the same time. There is no British system of justice; the English form of prosecution has evolved *ad hoc* and differs markedly from the Scottish, which owes more to Rome and the France of the Procurator. The English have a jury of twelve whereas the Scots have one of fifteen. A simple majority suffices in Scotland, but a majority of at least ten is required in England. To add further complications, the laws of evidence also differ.

In spite of these differences, it is useful to compare and contrast the two systems as McBarnet does, although the primary purpose of her study is to reveal how the rhetoric and ideology of justice differ from the reality of state rule through law. Much of her evidence is gleaned from courtroom observation, and therefore has a ring of truth about it, and where possible other relevant

and contemporary research studies are assembled in support of her thesis.

Unlike most socio-legal studies, which tend to focus on the interaction of police, lawyers, magistrates, judges and other officials, this book examines the structure, substance and procedures of the law itself. McBarnet aims to show that the democratic state rules through laws rather than delivering pure justice. The gap between real laws and abstract justice has of course bedevilled the history of Western civilization, although from time to time it has been narrowed. That Justinian should seek laws such as "the State may be well governed" and "uphold justice and triumph over its conquered enemies" was not recognition of slavery throughout the eastern Roman Empire. Nearer our own day, at least until recently, the legal disabilities placed on illegitimate children would have made an Antonine Roman wince.

This is not a philosophical work, nor does it pretend to be so. The concept of the rule of law is not control through legal procedures runs like a thread through many of its pages. McBarnet struggles hard to prove that something must be wrong with the system if a high proportion of people charged are found guilty or even plead guilty to criminal charges. Here she takes issue with Sir Robert Mark's theory that, having regard to the effectiveness of pre-trial procedures, the mere arraignment of a

person before the court indicates a strong probability of guilt.

She makes much of the point (and I agree with her here) that the trial should not be regarded in isolation from pre-trial procedures when we ask whether justice is being done rather than merely being seen to be done. She makes pertinent observations on police methods of gathering evidence, and interrogation, which is the part of the pre-trial procedure not seen by the public. Had McBarnet been writing in the aftermath of the publication of the report of the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure she might have found some of her questions about the police answered there; at least so far as England and Wales are concerned. That the Phillips Commission rejected the adoption in England of the procurator-fiscal system, preferring to it that of the British Columbian crown prosecutor, might have eased some of McBarnet's doubts concerning the difference between legal theory and legal practice in Scotland. The police station interviews, and eventually perhaps of video-recording, should likewise remove many doubts about unethical practices by the police.

As for the trial procedure itself, McBarnet is surely right when she argues that the public concept of justice differs greatly from courtroom reality. But the trial is not the dispensation of justice, but rather, to re-quoting, prosecution to prove its case beyond reasonable doubt. By the very nature of things justice to the victim, and to

the accused, must therefore at times be denied. It is in the sentencing of those convicted that efforts to do justice become more pronounced (and difficult), but McBarnet does not extend her enquiries far into these regions.

On the subject of summary courts and their correspondingly summary justice, she offers little more than withering cross-fire. Describing them as "theater without audiences", she rules out any possibility of their conforming to the traditional ideology of justice, which "they blatantly ignore every day". It is a remarkable fact, however, that in practice only a tiny proportion of summary convictions become the subject of appeal, even though legal aid is more readily available in these courts. Perhaps there is an underlying sense that even though the lower courts may lack the ritual, pomp and sophistication of the higher ones, being dealt with by one's peers in itself carries an idea of justice.

It is not to undermine the importance of this work to say that, while raising many questions about our system of criminal justice, it fails to offer many solutions. In England and Wales we await a Home Office decision on what is to be done with the Phillips Commission's Report. Meanwhile, however, we should not overlook the very important work being done by the Criminal Law Revision Committee, and the fact that, given the way our common law works, there are always opportunities for redressing defects in our system of criminal justice.

wish that such intercourse should be interrupted: at the same time I felt, without having any definite cause of complaint, that the experience of the last two terms showed it was not well for us to be too entirely together, and that if I intended myself to pursue steadily the resolutions I had formed, I must be prepared to find we should on some occasions not be suitable companions." It is a tribute to his magnetism that he usually managed to patch up the damage after one of these letters, but it must have been unnerving to receive such a cool assessment of one's failings as a friend.

Poor Gladstone, inordinately sensitive to any affront by Hallam, went so far as to draw up a summary of the course of their friendship from 1824 to 1829, detailing each sickening of affection, each reconciliation, wondering at last whether he could even call himself Hallam's friend. Professor Kolb says that one letter of Gladstone's in 1830 is "like the anguished outcry of a rejected lover." In his reply to it Hallam smoothed over his apparent neglect of Gladstone, but at the same time he felt impelled to write: "Now if you mean that such intercourse as we had at Eton is not likely again to fall to our lot, this is undoubtedly a stern truth."

Although he could be amusingly aware of Tennyson's failings, Hallam wrote of them with constant affection, and the evidence here is that it was only with him and James Milnes Gaskell that he maintained long and untroubled familiarity. It is impossible not to wonder whether some of his censoriousness may have sprung from his continual illness, running as it does like a dark and unperceived thread all through his correspondence until his sudden death from an aneurysm in 1833. Not the least of his worries was his intermittent fear that he might go insane.

Even Tennyson's sister Emily, to whom Hallam finally became en-

gaged after the long joint efforts of their relatives to separate them, was occasionally the butt of his teasing in a way that is hard to forgive unless we assume the combined effects of illness, sexual frustration, worry over Emily's health, and perhaps a nagging sense that the two of them were ill suited, in spite of the strength of his longing for her. When she was depressed or seemed insufficiently enthusiastic about the lessons and the languages he set her to learn, he was apt to write to Emily about the brilliance of his social acquaintance and his flirtations with a series of young ladies including Fanny Kemble, Charlotte Sotheby, the handsome Miss Morris, and other charmers to whom he referred only by their Christian names. Nor was he tactful about evoking the memory of Anna Wintour, with whom he had fancied himself in love when he was seventeen and she nearly a decade older. To his surprise Emily did not always make a quick recovery after such a letter. As Kolb indicates, it is questionable whether he and Emily could ever have been happy in marriage if he had lived.

Even after an edition of his letters totalling some 850 pages, the question of what Hallam was really like is not completely settled: whether he was the godlike paragon that the Apostles so admired and that Henry Ford recognized as the "most wonderful person altogether I ever knew" or whether John Ruskin better characterized him as "the accomplished-valet philosophic Hallam". But finally no answer of that kind will ever be needed, as it was in the case of Rupert Brooke, that later and equally golden Cambridge undergraduate. What ultimately seems most important about Hallam is not the truth of his own personality and accomplishments but his effect upon others.

The late T. H. Vail Motter began the preliminary stages of this edition



Arthur Hallam reading Walter Scott aloud on a voyage from Bordeaux to Dublin, September 9, 1830. Tennyson in profile. A contemporary water-colour reproduced in *Tennyson and His Friends* edited by Hallam Lord.

some forty years ago. The present editor does not indicate how much of the final version is his own work, but most of the annotation seems to be his. Nearly all the information that any reader might require who is completely unacquainted with the facts of Hallam's life is voluminously supplied. It is unlikely that it will ever be necessary to re-edit or add to these letters. Sometimes, indeed, the apparatus of the footnotes seems to take on a sinister life of its own, as if the note is merely a direction to look elsewhere at another note, which in turn refers solely to yet another note, and so on until the

reader feels that he is on a solipsistic treasure-hunt and gives up without completing the chase.

The style of the introduction and notes is least graceful when dealing with names and titles. The present Lady Elton and her family may well be started to find her described as "the scion of the maternal branch of the [Hallam] family, Lady Margaret Elton". Apparently the editor is lapsing into elegant antonomastic variations, referring, for example, to Gladstone as "the four-time prime minister" and to Tennyson as "the Bard" or "the Laureate". And there is a disconcertingly chummy air

about the references to the child figures in Hallam's life by their Christian names; his father is constantly called simply "Henry", and even more improbably Gladstone becomes "William Ewart". On the other hand Tennyson as a young man is introduced as "Mr. Alfred Tennyson" but unnecessarily called "Alfred" when he is in his mid-seventies. Arthur Hallam once wrote about a review of the poems of Alfred and Charles Tennyson by Leigh Hunt: "You will be amused with the odd style of his observations and the frank familiarity with which he calls them by their Christian names, just as if he had supped with them a hundred times."

almost nervously evasive about such matters. There is no reason, they say, to doubt Tennyson's famous statement that "he did not write the sections with any view of weaving them into a whole... 'until I found that I had written so many.' But controversy has always attended this remark, as to the meaning of "so many", and it is implicitly settled in this edition by the careful display of the evidence. The verdict is not at all that Tennyson was thinking of a "whole" as early as 1834, within a year of Hallam's death. Perhaps an incessant exposure to this text damages an editor's sense of its contours; they are, after all, labile matters, to do with feeling, and there is a possibility for plasticity in the reading of *In Memoriam* comparable to that which Tennyson experienced, and drew on, in writing it. But to observe that sections 48 and 49, for example, "two of the most beautiful and unuttered anguish, and an in-section 5 is to ignore a glaring fact: we (and Tennyson or, preferably, "the mourner") are now more poem; what is the reason for the recurrence of such material at this point?

In other words, the growth of *In Memoriam* involved a stretching of the poles of grief and consolation; even the registering of a degree of stretch that was not easily experienced, dated. It is a fascinating story of the plasticity of a given poetic material, lived in a peculiar way. In the Trinity notebook section 9 was followed by section 17, in which its closing line ("More than my brothers are to brother" is to me); thereafter the two sections are separated, the word "death" is changed, but a new link between them is substituted in the line "Till all my widow's race be run". So much depends on sequence and pacing; aspects which were surely Tennyson's most important. For this poem, as he worked and reworked it, the poem and which are not, in the end, the experience of reading it. Yet Shatto and Shaw are

obscure poem. It requires aegreia not of the patchy kind offered here, and not pitched in this way. The editors worry away at problems that are scarcely problematical (usually because they have attracted laborious attention in the past), and in their hands an "obscure" becomes an uninteresting thing; no more than a poor piece of expression, to be cleared up. The obscurity of *In Memoriam* is of many kinds; some of it is no doubt irritating, but some is profound. The whole work (meaning here the numbered sequence) starts off with a particularly obscure reference to Goethe. This is an instance of what Churton Collins (in connection with "the sinless years" / That breathed beneath the Syrian blue" in section 82) called "Tennysonese": obscurity that results from an idiosyncratic periphrasis. But the spectrum runs from here all the way to Eliot-like effects, as in section 88:

O tell me where the senses mix,
O tell me where the passions meet,
Whence radiate fierce extremes, empty
Thy spirit in the darkening leaf.

Somewhere, along the line come those long descriptions of nature, with their bafflingly unfixed viewpoints, of which the Christmas poem, "It is the day...", contains perhaps the most extreme example.

Among the examples of Tennysonese that could have been clarified are the first verses of sections 82 and 90. There is no comment at all on sections 20 and 125 (though there are certain number in the book). Section 124 has extremely teasing syntax and logic, which is ignored. What is section 3 about, or section 347? On a smaller scale, there are familiar, but difficult formulations in the poem, such as "merit lives from man to man" / And not from man, O Lord, to thee" or "truths in manifold darkly join / Deep-seated in our mystic frame". "Mystic frame" is used by Tennyson twice. What is its connection with "sensitive frame"? What are the "iron hills" of section 38? Finally, does this section really contain, as least reference to evolution, pace the Victorian commentators?

HALLAM TENNYSON (Editor):
Studies in Tennyson
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0 333 27884 4

In literary history, chronology—whereby one thing amiably issues in another—has been supplanted, in recent critical thinking, by a dire version of genealogy, which argues deterministically that writers are fated and foreknown by their predecessors. Now, instead of creating the world anew, the writer is seen to be engaged in a desperate or devious rebuffing of genes. Literature and its grim predestination is the nightmare from which each writer seeks to escape. He has, of course, no chance of succeeding: not even the words he uses originate with him, since they're all hand-downs.

Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Or by the fatuity of repetition:
... with honour, honour, honour to him
Eternal honour to his name.

The poem also commits a subversion of ceremony by saying that "we deplore" the moribund leader, and the final lines can't help but suggest that relief of a nation which can now relax, with no exorbitant victor to rout it:

... in the vast cathedral leave him,
God accept him, Christ receive him.

The terseness is funereal but it's also brisk, impatient, glad of an end. Tennyson's four-line epitaph for General Gordon is similarly paratidial. Here a single lax word suffices to make short ridance of the national hero: the "warrior of God, man's friend, and tyrant's foe" is "now somewhere dead far in the vast Soudan". "Somewhere" casually couldn't care less about the grave-digger to decree the future, bequeathing to his family the task of memorializing him. His son Hallam memorialized the first biography in 1877, his grandson Charles produced another in 1948. It's clear that Sir

Charles Tennyson, to whom two essays in this volume, one by his own son Hallam and the other by Robert Bernard Martin, are devoted—felt the intimidation and inhibition of ancestry, which loomed on the poet Tennyson and which in different ways handicaps all poets. He expressed this in a simple, artlessly Oedipal image. Contrasting his own domination with the looming presence of his grandfather, he said that Tennyson "was a dominant height, who made every subsequent event in my life seem rather flat".

The metaphor of the dominant height places Tennyson in the psychological landscape of Burke's infantile fears and desires. Burke's dual categories of the sublime and the beautiful have power over us, because they deputize as opposed, archetypal parents. The beautiful dears itself to us because it recalls the affection of the mother; the profound of the sublime, like the mountain peaks which stalk and accost the young Wordsworth, or the "dominant height" of the elder Tennyson—terribly because they embody the baleful authority of the father, who has biologically pre-empted us. Charles Tennyson was sure that the hero of his life had been another, as if his grandfather had prevented him from acquiring an identity of his own. His autobiography begins by admitting, "I suppose the most important influence in my life... has been the fact that I am a grandson of the great poet of the great Victorian era." The sentence compounds the problem by its piling-up of appositives. Tennyson's greatness is also a certain number in the book). Section 124 has extremely teasing syntax and logic, which is ignored. What is section 3 about, or section 347? On a smaller scale, there are familiar, but difficult formulations in the poem, such as "merit lives from man to man" / And not from man, O Lord, to thee" or "truths in manifold darkly join / Deep-seated in our mystic frame". "Mystic frame" is used by Tennyson twice. What is its connection with "sensitive frame"? What are the "iron hills" of section 38? Finally, does this section really contain, as least reference to evolution, pace the Victorian commentators?

The twin hereditaries, familial and literary, intersect in Theodore Redpath's essay on "Tennyson and the Literature of Greece and Rome". The poet's father prescribed for the youthful Alfred an apprenticeship to the classics—recitation of Horatian odes, annotations to Virgil. Redpath comments that there's no evidence of antipathy to the poet Tennyson was made to study. But Tennyson's reference to the classics is always qualified by apologetic provisos. These look like humble admissions of defeat, though they're actually critical recantations, disavowing either the ethics or the aesthetics of classicism. "Tiresias" is a good example. The prophet persuades his son Menoeceus to achieve "one great deed" which will guarantee his promotion to the Elysium of old soldiers and valorous huntsmen. He contends, in accord with the tenets of

classical epic, that man can defy himself by undertaking mighty tasks. Yet the poem includes a critique of this classical confidence. The after-life of heroic celebrity is qualified at once when Tennyson adds an epilogue referring to the death of Hallam. His friend's extinction, arbitrary and motiveless, cannot be justified, like that of Menoeceus, as a sacrifice.

The classical death disdains mere human life, certain if not of salvation then of an enduring fame which will atone for the discomfort of extermination. But the modern death is unwanted and fought against, and it opens on to a dubious nowhere. The classical poet can rejoice, like Pindar, in the enjoyments which await our hero. The modern poet, with no such assurance, is left behind trying to effect a resurrection of Hallam in verse. The contradiction between these two modes of death and of poetic obituary movingly confounds the poem. The "Pagan Paradise" which Tennyson has evoked is dispersed, and his own lyricism now sounds crass and insensitive, "like would-be guests", he says, "an hour too late". Redpath argues that it was at first Tennyson's intention to interpret Hallam's death sacrificially, by analogy with that of Menoeceus; he changed his mind. In Redpath's view, because "the whole idea verged on blasphemy". But the blasphemy is Tiresias', and it's an offence against life, not against any god who might preside in "the unknown". Tiresias promises his son that he'll join a company of eugenic angels, "in height and powers more than human". Tennyson can offer no such consolation to Hallam or to himself. He hopes not for a splendid, swarving exit but for a quiet surcease, a peaceful lapse into non-being. The classical death is vainglorious; the modern one expires on an unanswered question. The bang and the whimper confront one another, and as they do, Tennyson's best discards his own superb imitation of Pindar and disowns the classicism to which he has officially been paying tribute.

For similar reasons, when attempting epic, Tennyson begins as Redpath points out—at the end, "Thus in 'Morte d'Arthur' epic subdules into elegy. All Tennyson's poetry is elegiac, but in 'Morte d'Arthur' the elegy itself suffers a death. Arthur, in his explanation of changes in the old order, resigns himself to his own obsolescence and death. His elegy for himself is an uncomplicated justification of history. But the poem doesn't end here: Arthur's reasoned elegy is generalized into the noise of walling which itself expires as it fades on the mere. The poem's own lyrical sound gives up the ghost, and in the last line dies away. Elegy is altered too in Arthur's request that Bedivere should pray for him, because his image—"let thy voice / Rise like a fountain for me night and day"—suggests unassuaged mourning, not devout prayer. The fountain is lachrymose and, whereas prayer mounts from heaven to earth (Herbert called it thunder in reverse), a fountain only essays that ascent and then weeps its waters back to the ground.

Nor is this the only way in which "Morte d'Arthur" detaches itself from the past, revoking its epic and classical ambitions. In 1852 Tennyson added a derivative frame to it. This treated the truncated epic as a biographical relic, a musty fragment "much better burnt". The poem itself is now, like Arthur, the victim of time, which has made it redundant. The poem's epic grandeur, its reverence for ancestral time, is overruled by the different, evolutionary time invoked by Eyre Hall. He consigns poetry to extinction, because "nature brings not back the Mastodon". Poetry's plaintive regression is censured by the relentless movement of biological and geological time ahead into the future.

John Bayley writes brilliantly of this self-disbelief in his contribution to the *Studies*, which defends Tennyson from the imputation of decadence. He sees in Tennyson's apologies and equivocations the winking, nudging asides of a "tactful humour". This future comedy permits Tennyson to crave the deception of lyricism while deprecating his own need for it. Arthur likewise manages to have it both ways when lyrically conjecturing about his own afterlife. He intimates to Bedivere that he's not at all sure whether he'll reach Avilion or even whether it exists:

I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
(For all my mind is troubled with a doubt)

Having confessed his agnostic trepidations in advance, he then goes on to anticipate Avilion by lyrically conjuring it up. His snugly picturesque account of it as a seasonless temperate garden suburb or a seaside haven for the retired has, as John Bayley proposes in the case of the Sabbath morn from *The Two Voices*, "the exultation which often goes with parody". Arthur admits that he doesn't believe in the place, yet goes on to describe it anyway, marking his own lyricism as no more than a trusting fiction.

For John Bayley, Tennyson's saving grace is a chuckling confidence, a weary but elegantly implying that the only way to make this boring life bearable is to write beautiful poetry about it. Tennyson knows himself to be addicted to a delusive lyricism, but by confessing his dependence—in asides like Arthur's to Bedivere—he cures himself of the enslavement. Glancing out of the artifice, he is thus the reverse of the decadent artist, who hides behind the decorative impersonality of his work. As John Bayley says, the decadent artist is convinced that the surface is impenetrable. In Tennyson the verbal surface is never this secure. Tennyson's most apparently innocent images can be suspected—as they are when John Bayley begins to laugh, ingenuously and infectiously, at the word "loathed" in "Marlans", or at "unspeakable" in the poem to the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, or to make fun of the Lady of the Lake's underwater sword-factory—of being self-mockeries.

What Whitman called Tennyson's "finest verbalism" has a lassitude which, not believing in itself, seems to long for its own expiry. This limpatience of lyricism with itself emerges in the description of Enoch Arden's island. Like every Tennysonian landscape, this one is a visual lament, an ocular elegy, describing what's not there;

The blaze upon the waters to the east;
The blaze upon the island overhead
The blaze upon the waters to the west;
Then the great stars that globed themselves
In Heaven,
The hollow-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no
sail.

"It is magnificent, is it not?" asks W.W. Robson, without enquiring why it is so. It is magnificent for the odd but uniquely Tennysonian reason that it's disavowed by its own powers of observation. For the shipwrecked Enoch, all there is to do is observe, and the lines convey his fatigue in the recurrences of "blaze", which accumulate to make the glare intolerable, and in the circling back of "and again". The conclusion specifies the one drab object which, among all this exotica, is the most desired and which is, therefore, unforthcoming. Like the imprisoning double sestina of Sidney's shepherds in the *Aradula*, this is an instance of lyricism redating itself so as to match the tedious and inertial of an enforced pastoral. Even more acutely, it criticizes the dreary routine of description. Enoch is keeping watch, but is not interested in poetic observation or in the verbal transcription of landscape. These literary activities are rites for passing time, recourses of a bored poet and perhaps, eventually, of a stranded man, who has nothing else with which to occupy himself. Robson Crusoe dealt with the emptiness

by counting; Enoch Arden will do so by describing.

The words lavished on the landscape serve—as words in Tennyson often do—to fill a vacancy. Tennyson's habit of repetition isn't indulgence or superfluity but a desolating admission of incapacity. Repetition is threatening, bawling an absence, or performing over and over again a ritual of grief and loss. Examples abound: "to weep, and weep and weep / My whole soul out to thee" or "answer echoes, dying, dying, dying" or "bury me, bury me / Deeper, ever so little deeper" or "hollow, hollow, hollow all delight". In repeating the words, Tennyson is emptying them. He used to entrance himself by chanting his own name. Saying again and again the words which are the chance caption of your self is a tactic for voiding and cancelling out that self. While making nonsense of the words, you mystically make a nonentity of yourself. This achieves internally the same lyric evacuation Tennyson works externally on the landscapes, which are perceived by "dying ears" or "dying eyes" and discloses not so much what W.W. Robson calls a "largeness of vision" as an abstract devastation.

Two lines which sum up this obliteration are

There where the long street roars, hath
The silence of the central sea.

The great, incongruous word here is "central". That inappropriate adjective bravely clings to an urban sense of location (a Victorian and metropolitan conviction of centrality, as in the naming of Grand Central Station, which is grand because it's central). Yet the rest of the image casts this spatial confidence adrift or submerges it, since the ocean is centreless, and its dominion—which Tennyson is here imagining—is an affront to the very idea of anthropocentricity. Even

The moan of doves in immemorial elms,

And murmur of innumerable bees
can sound, when compared with these other Tennysonian landscapes of devastation, disturbing. The shepherd in *The Princess* who utters these lines is persuading the maid to leave her mountain solitude and come down to the inhabited, fecund plains. But these final lines suddenly annihilate the landscape with which he's tempting her. When she arrives—if she does—she'll find her lowlands comfortlessly bare as her home. The elms are memorial to a dead time, the song of the doves is a moan. By the second of the lines there's nothing left but muted sound—not lyricism but the echo of it, like the demise of the lament at the end of "Morte d'Arthur".

The elegiac unmaking of pastoral accomplished here, or by Enoch Arden when he scans the landscape for what's not there, alters another inherited form in "Come not, when I am dead". Robson—in his essay praises this as perfect, then adds that there's nothing the critic need say about it. I think there is something to be said about the way it inverts the *carpe diem* argument. It's another case of the literary past Tennyson inherits experienced by him as a living death. The *carpe diem* poems of the seventeenth century, by Donne, Marvell and Rochester, are impelled by a pornographic panic. The imminent expunging of the senses by death frightens the poet into valuing those instants—themselves small anticipations of death—when life is sexually at its most intense. Tennyson's character—"Come not, when I am dead"—reasons differently. He would prefer to be bedded in the dust than with the voracious child who's lifted him. In volunteering to die, he is also pronouncing the death of a poetic convention. He is "sick", he says, "of Time"—sick of it, and made sick by it; the morbid remnant of a tradition he buries along with himself.

The Idylls of the King also desert and belie the form to which they pay

The course of grief

By Michael Mason

SUSAN SHATTO and MARION SHAW (Editors):
Tennyson's *In Memoriam*
397pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £25.
0 19 812747 2

A well-known episode in the annals of English literary scholarship was the prohibition formerly placed by the donors of the Tennyson manuscripts, at Trinity College, Cambridge, on their being published, or even copied. That prohibition was lifted in 1969, just after the appearance of Christopher Ricks's great edition of *The Complete Poems*. The relaxation has now resulted in this meticulous and very capable edition of *In Memoriam*, in which all the Trinity material, as well as all other published or unpublished variants, is fully cited. A certain sense of euphoric doubt opening on skeletons must attach to this volume. How much of a thrill will the reader get from the new pieces of text?

The answer has to be: not much. Indeed, on the evidence of this edition, the prohibition seems puzzling for there is nothing shocking in the Trinity *In Memoriam* material; nor, with the exception of a single stanza in section 81 (with its striking image of a blind boy), and the additional poem "The light that shone", which Ricks published in the TLS once the ban was lifted, does there appear to be any major variant which has not become available to scholars by other routes.

The Trinity *In Memoriam* is a very different poem from the one printed from 1850 onwards, albeit in ways that could have been identified by anyone willing to put in some hard work among the unrestricted papers and the published scholarship. The importance of this new edition is that the whole picture—of *In Memoriam* at every stage of its growth, as far as this is known—is now assembled in one place. Its achievement here is dramatic, but it is fair to ask also: how much do

the editors make of the picture? How much insight does their own commentary afford into the long process of mutation which they accurately record?

There are two Trinity manuscripts. One, certainly the earlier, is a notebook with versions of about a half-dozen sections. It dates from the mid-1830s, and is, as Shatto and Shaw emphasize, the first surviving manuscript in which *In Memoriam* lyrics are treated as a sequence, though it very probably does not represent the beginning of this idea. The second manuscript is a volume in long, narrow format containing seventy-odd sections, and it seems to have been completed in 1842. Shatto and Shaw hold the view that it contains Tennyson's "final intention": at this date, "with respect to a tribute to Arthur Hallam". They grant that the blank spaces separating each section (generally any remainder of the recto, and all the verso, of a "flexibility" about this. In fact there are thirty-six sections between the first and second Christmas episodes, and only seven between the second and third. Presumably Tennyson envisaged filling but the latter chronological bracket, with considerably more material before he would have published; just as in the Huntington notebook (probably written in the latter 1830s) the first Christmas adjacent to what suggests, interestingly, that these manuscripts sometimes served as skeletons for the whole structure of the poem.

With these reservations, it seems probable that the Trinity "ledger" is a first, abandoned version of *In Memoriam*. Shatto and Shaw well bring out how very different the feel the ending of the poem would have been in this version, as well as Tennyson's changing ideas about how the ending should be handled (a history of the poem's composition, with the movement from grief to operation). At one stage, it seems that the poem was to have concluded with the ambiguous lines: "For though my life may breathe adieu, I cannot think the thing farewell".

the end of the quintessential section 123 ("There rolls the deep..."). Even this was an afterthought, and a means of developing the last lines of section 57, a previous candidate for closing position: "And 'Ave, Ave, evermore' (a poem that, as some early commentators acutely observed, has a note of finality). Tennyson tried to incorporate at least five other sections into the closing sequence of this 1842 *In Memoriam*, only to reject them.

But Shatto and Shaw do not develop the implications of all this for the version that was eventually published. Section 57 remained, of final statement, too strong as a hunched by following, and making reference to, sections 55 and 56, the celebrated, appalled descriptions of nature's prodigality and destructiveness. Even more remarkably, the long section 95, whose subject is the doubt-stricken but ecstatic dusk/dawn trance in which "the living soul was flashed on mine"—the climax of a transcendental conviction there already written by 1842, though it was not included in the Trinity version.

In other words, the growth of *In Memoriam* involved a stretching of the poles of grief and consolation; even the registering of a degree of stretch that was not easily experienced, dated. It is a fascinating story of the plasticity of a given poetic material, lived in a peculiar way. In the Trinity notebook section 9 was followed by section 17, in which its closing line ("More than my brothers are to brother" is to me); thereafter the two sections are separated, the word "death" is changed, but a new link between them is substituted in the line "Till all my widow's race be run". So much depends on sequence and pacing; aspects which were surely Tennyson's most important. For this poem, as he worked and reworked it, the poem and which are not, in the end, the experience of reading it. Yet Shatto and Shaw are

homage. Tennyson wanted to write an epic; idyll means epic's failure. The substance is already present in "The Lotus Eaters" when, after the initial encouragement by Odysseus, the strenuous activism of epic nodes off into pastoral somnolence and lyric inertia. For the lotus eaters, the idyll is a vacation from their epic duty. The idyll of the King takes an epic subject – the millennial politics of the Round Table – and shows it flawed and contentious idylls, concerned not with public responsibility but with the anxieties of domestic life: marital tribulation and domestic intrigue. John Bayley admires the "spacious official grandeur" of the idylls, yet what's most remarkable about them is their ennoblement of this solidity, in which they seem not to believe. The smiles betray this faltering of poetic faith. The epic smile supposedly fortifies character by associating the taut heroic will with the elemental willfulness of nature. The repetition of epithets is a rehearsal of force. But Tennyson's repetitions, rather than expressing reassurance, confess a plangent helplessness. He says things over and over precisely because words are unavailing, and can't revivify the dead. The dedication of the idylls to the dead Prince Albert exemplifies this mournful inability to rouse language from its despair:

I dedicate,
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears –
These idylls.

The smiles don't invest the characters with power but deprive them of it. They also undermine the epic, displacing the earnest political and moral conscience of the Arthurians by dispersing their energy through a landscape which is vacant, spectral and prostrate. The "small violence" of Modred's resentment already diminished by the adjective, which makes it the shadow of an epic fury like the wrath of Achilles – is wasted by transference to the landscape. As the simile puts it, his emotion now ruffles him like a wind irritating "On the bare coast." The violence, small to begin with, is further reduced by that superlative "little". Arthur, when he leaves Guinevere, liquefies and evaporates into a smile. He who was "The King" vaporizes into "the phantom of a Giant". Repetition carries on the process of insubstantialization by specifying that inside the mist he is "gray / And grayish". At last he fades into a more simile, the deceptive likeness of a solid thing, becoming "as mist / Before her". When Guinevere cries after him, another simile suspends her reach in the air. Her voice doesn't stream that "spouting from a cliff / Falls in mid air".

Similes serve in Tennyson to undo and dematerialize the objects they're meant to strengthen. There's an equal perversity to his use of metre. Victorian poetry mechanizes metre. Its propulsiveness and recurrence makes the poetic line – in Browning's "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix" or at the end of "Locksley Hall" – a linguistic and railway, an unpausing engine. But for Tennyson this metrical inevitability suggests the operation of a fate, an automatism which can't be arrested. The charge of Tennyson's Light Brigade is motivated and sustained by the urgency and irresistibility of the poem's metre. The verbal form fits the doomed adventure: the metre is driven and peremptory, and the repetitions – as always in Tennyson – are: imprisonment and disarming, a circumscription of the brigadiers, leaving them no exit: Cannot to the right of them, Cannot to the left of them, Cannon behind them.

The charge exiles Tennyson not because it's an incident of national valour but because it's a collective suicide. The brigadiers rush gratefully towards an extinction which other characters, like Oenone or Tithonus, passively solicit. Tennyson's lyricism converts death into a song, a last exhalation of breath like the dying swan's carol in "Morte d'Arthur", but the brigadiers experience together a death which isn't lyric but epic, because it has been mechanized and collectivized. Perhaps "The Charge of the Light Brigade" is the epic Tennyson didn't manage to write in *Idylls of the King*; it realizes, as Kipling did when he visited

Chicago and was thrilled by the abattoirs, with their railways and pulleys for the efficient slaughtering of multitudes of pigs – that, in the nineteenth century, an epic poem must sing the praises of a technology which has vowed itself to the extermination of nature.

Studies in Tennyson contains, however, a curiously argued reply to this notion of Tennyson's downward sense of time and of the morbidity which invades his poetic messiah. This is Christopher Ricks's essay "Tennyson Inheriting the Earth". Ricks scoffs at what he sees as the psychotic melodrama of literary history which Harold Bloom has popularized, whereby influence becomes a clinical source of anxiety. Writing about poetic inheritance – Tennyson's borrowings from his poetic forebears and from his own juvenile self – Ricks discovers, in this acceptance of the past's bequest, an evolution by which Tennyson was haunted. Ricks refuses to see Tennyson's relation either to poetry's past or to the earth's prehistory as despairing. The self-plagiarism and allusion he traces in Tennyson's verse are, for Ricks, ecological economies. By recycling the past they assure the eternity of nature, which is enriched and perpetuated by our own individual deaths. Instead of considering poets – as Bloom does – to be engaged in a filial competition to surpass their fathers, Ricks describes them as brothers, toiling together, benignly apportioning a terrestrial wealth between themselves. Influence isn't a symptom of but of a comforting, fraternal solidarity. The past doesn't, in Ricks's view, reprove or inhibit. It contributes a richness which the present feeds on.

Thus Ricks's Tennyson is as cheerfully gaudy as the hero of his *Keats and Ennoblement*. "Growth may be thought of as digestive," he says, "and allusion may self-refer by speaking of eating and drinking." It's a beautifully humane interpretation, though it's compromised by Ricks's style. No wonder he is so fascinated by self-reference in Tennyson: his own writing is self-consciously self-referential and tends, like the cabalistic serpent, to gobble up its tail. This is why his arguments so often rely on puns, generated by the overlapping of words and the involution of style. Noting, for instance, an allusion to Marvell in *In Memoriam*, then linking it with Wordsworth's faith in the power of art to achieve death-defying marvels, Ricks comments that Tennyson, in contrast, placed his modest hopes in the Marvellian Ricks that had wrought it. Even while Ricks is decrying a view of literature which sees it as parasitically self-involved, his style intimates the opposite. His most dazzling verbal effects are themselves small absurdist poems about the transmission of influence, and they wrap themselves round into a circularity from which there is no escape. He turns up a series of rhymes between "envision", "iron" and "Byron" which connect *Hudibras* for Tennyson this metrical inevitability suggests the operation of a fate, an automatism which can't be arrested. The charge of Tennyson's Light Brigade is motivated and sustained by the urgency and irresistibility of the poem's metre. The verbal form fits the doomed adventure: the metre is driven and peremptory, and the repetitions – as always in Tennyson – are: imprisonment and disarming, a circumscription of the brigadiers, leaving them no exit: Cannot to the right of them, Cannot to the left of them, Cannon behind them.

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Epistolary evasions

By Lachlan Mackinnon

CECIL Y. LANG AND EDGAR F. SHANNON (Editors).
The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson Volume 1, 1821-1850
366pp. Clarendon Press: University Press, £17.50.
0 19 812659 0

Tennyson gave little away in his letters. He would have hated the appearance of this volume, in which style, the curt, the humorous, or the times he plays at being bumbling, bewildered, or benevolent: unlike Keats, he reveals next to nothing of his inner self by post.

The closest we can come to watching his creativity in action is in a letter to James Spedding written in early October 1834. Tennyson begins with a humorous apology for being late in writing – his characteristic opening move. Time and again he begins so, his friends having written to him begging for some reply (a pattern significantly broken only where proofs or publication are at issue). He tells Spedding "I have written several things since I last saw you", but that "you can scarcely expect me to write them out for you: for I can scarcely bring myself to write them out for myself and do you think I love you better than myself?" There is, typically, no revelation of poetic character, though there is an occasional pardonable air of playing the poet. A reference to Taylor's Preface to *Philip van Artevelde* (1834) leads him on to Byron and Shelley, whose "peculiar strength" did not yet give the world another heart and new pulses, and so we are kept going. Blessed be those that grease the wheels of the old world, inasmuch as to move on is better than to stand still.

Not great criticism, but nearer to it than Tennyson often comes here and, of course, dependent on a context of shared allusion. Unusually carried away by epistolary fervour, Tennyson proceeds to contradict himself. "On second thoughts write thee out a poem partly because I like it, partly to give a local habitation to this paper and in your brainpiece what else fits loosely through the wires of my own memory like a Sibyl's leaf."

"Love thou thy land", he begins. Meet it as it changes should control. Our being, lest we rust in ease; All but the basis of the Soul.

The thought is recognizably the same as that behind the earlier remark on Byron and Shelley. The mastery of the verse reveals the essential thread-bareness of the prose – "grease the wheels" is a metaphor whose ostentatious at-handness kills it beside the surreptitious "rust", which is almost carried past us by the stately procession of the verse. For Tennyson, verse is not a vessel in which thought is contained, but a medium in which thinking is done. His characteristic effects, both those of sound and those of metaphorical extension and interaction, are precisely those to which prose, particularly in this form, is most resistant.

This is not, though, the whole story. Tennyson's refusal to read his paper to the Apostles, and his subsequent resignation, may be seen as the first indicators of what was to become a lifelong aversion to prose, but the reasons for this lie as much in his nature as in differences of literary kind. The tentative, exploratory quality of his best poetry, its organic power of implication, are stylistic consequences deriving from a tentative character. For instance, Tennyson can easily be and often is, treated as understated. His prolonged virginity puzzles us as it should not: Tennyson simply could not give his "self" in any sense, easily, as the long trail of lapsed friendships shows. He was enclosed within himself by a combination of arrogance and diffidence, of which those who knew him

were conscious, as we can see from their description of him and letters to him.

Given the paucity of material available under the title as strictly defined, the editors have sensibly decided to include as many letters and journal extracts by other Tennysons and the poet's friends and acquaintances as reasonably possible. Their decision will make this volume outstandingly useful to Tennysonians as a convenient compendium of sources. Other reviewers have noted the editors' wit, which is to be applauded as it nowhere interferes with the very weighty matter they have to present. Their annotation is scrupulous and persons are wherever possible located and set in relation with one another, which is particularly useful when one comes to grapple with the large families of the period. Tennysons, Rawlinsons, Lushingtons. Messingbords and many others are set out for us in exemplary detail. The only quibble one might have is the practice of annotating the first significant appearance, rather than simply the first appearance, of some characters, but the index states where notes are to be found: it is only the linear reader who may sometimes be puzzled.

Besides the wealth of scholarly information and period reference, incidental detail abounds: beef, chops, bottles, pipes, bowls, hydropathy, worms (Septimus may have had them) and money – particularly money. A sense of the solid universe in which the poet moved is immensely valuable, especially when seen through the eyes of those with whom he shared it. This is sometimes funny, as on the occasion of Tennyson's visit to Dickens in Lausanne in 1846. Dickens wrote to Foster about it, saying that he had given his guests (Moxon) "accompanying the poet" "some fine Rhine wine, and cigars innumerable". No bet comment on Tennyson's greedy smoking habits can be found than his own letter to Fitzgerald about the same occasion, which speaks of some excellent biscuits "and a flask of liebfraumilch". The cigars vanished from Tennyson's mind as quickly as they were smoked.

A more important aspect, however, is the play that is made on our feelings. The book opens when Tennyson is twelve, and ends when he is a married man, Poet Laureate, and the author of *In Memoriam*. There is a perpetual dramatic irony to his worries and complaints, in that we know what is to become of him, and therefore also to the soliloquies of Heath in 1835. John Morre told Tennyson that "There are many more people that take an interest in you than you are aware of", and although he was referring directly to his own sister's admiration for the poetry, we can sense an undercurrent of personal concern which forces us involuntarily to participate in the affection he felt for the poet.

There is irony in letters to him, also, as in one from Matthew Allen early in the "pyrographic" scheme to mass-produce wood carvings for the poorer classes, a ramshackle business in which Tennyson was to lose all his money. Allen writes that "fear is empathetic with his shyness", lachrymose relief, "you would see the depth and sincerity of the heart of the man who calls himself your friend, and who trusts in God, that

he will be able to give the lie to all those who were suspicious, but he is from me to boast, far be it from me to say a word against any one. The editors confess that "Allen's handwriting is awesome, and the ten of this letter may be to some extent made, not he gotten", but it rings true.

Richer still is the correspondence of Charles Tennyson d'Eyncourt. At the time of the pyrographic scheme, Mary, Emily, Matilda and Cecilia Tennyson wrote to him to ask for their money. They were tart ("Will you be sorry that we should be a little richer than we have been, or what is it that you object to?") but a shade less than openly rude. He was not deceived, however, for he wrote nine days later to their mother saying emphatically that he had done as asked, "although 6 months is the usual notice" and that "I retain every proper and kind feeling toward my nieces consistent with what is due to myself, but I cannot permit any one to write offensive letters to me." "Both as a Gentleman and as a relation" he says, he is in high dudgeon. His pomposity and over-sensitiveness were, of course, the reflection of a deep vulnerability, and in these letters he achieves pathos on several occasions. For instance, he shows in a letter to his son his anxiety both as father and as social climber about the name he has just adopted, and his family's ability to use it. The most notable is a letter to his son George Hildeyard Tennyson d'Eyncourt on September 1, 1835:

d'Eyncourt is spelt with a Y in all the old authorities. The Harlequin College have assessed that as the orthography. The Pronunciation is like Ei – not A or I not d'Eyncourt, or exactly d'Eyncourt but nearly that – Ei – as it sounds in Eight, a the pronunciation. We write it with a little d as the name is de Eyncourt. I may be able shortly to send you an account of the family and our descent in both lines from the Lords d'Eyncourt. You will well imagine the main reasons for the adoption of this name.

The vanity and anxiety lest George Hildeyard get it wrong are so touchingly mixed that the last sentence cuts two ways: yes, he is dissociating himself from the Somersby Tennysons but yes, he is a very foolish man with no self-understanding.

Our knowledge of the characters in the Tennyson drama is considerably enhanced, then. The poet, however, remains finally elusive. This is partly due, of course, to the deprivations of his immediate successors. The destruction of his correspondence with Hallam seems irrevocably unnecessary, and Hallam Tennyson's editorial procedures generally do some disservice; but, as the new editors say, he made a great contribution as well, and he should not be too harshly judged, the less so as he knew that the aloofness that made Tennyson keep his wedding secret was not only temperamental but a genuine hatred of being watched. Here, he is permitted his privacy, but that privacy can be seen as remarkable in its depth when set against the openness of his correspondents. He was not going to risk accidental self-revelation, and it is appropriate that this volume ends with a late discovery, a letter from Hallam to Moxon, his first love to his publisher: Tennyson is being taken care of, who was so well able to take care of himself.

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The Left out of step

By James Joll

F. L. CARSTEN:
War against War
British and German Radical Movements in the First World War
285pp. Batsford. £12.50.
0 7134 36972

When the war broke out in 1914 the intelligent governments were relieved and surprised by the almost unanimous support they obtained. Nearly seventy years later we are still surprised at the extent to which that support lasted in spite of the length of the war, the hardships involved and the useless sacrifices which the strategy of the respective high commands demanded. F. L. Carsten's interesting, scholarly and quietly original new book reminds us, however, that in spite of the patriotic solidarity which the majority maintained throughout the war, there was both in England and Germany from the beginning a current of opposition to the war which grew in strength as the hardships and casualties increased, so that in Germany by the autumn of 1918 it was strong enough to have a brief period of apparent success and looked as if it might sweep away for good the military establishment and the militarist values which had been partly responsible for the war.

There have been a number of studies of the radical opposition in England and Germany in the First World War. In the case of Britain these include Keith Robbins's study of the pacifists, *The Abolition of War*, Marvin Schwartz's account of *The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics during the First World War* and some interesting chapters in David Marle's *The German Side: the opposition to the war has usually been treated in the context of the development of the Socialist parties, as in Susanne Miller's *Bürgerkrieg und Klassenkampf*, or of the history of the German Revolution and subsequent developments of the German Left, as in David Morgan's *The Socialist Left and the German Revolution*, while the relevant chapters of Peter Nettl's classic study of Rosa Luxemburg or Helmut Tietz's recent biography of Karl Liebknecht are necessarily more limited in scope. Carsten has written the first book which analyses opposition to the war in Britain and Germany on a comparative basis. He has, by a careful and exhaustive study of the available archives, shown the nature and extent of the grass-roots opposition to the war and its relation to the organized political movements of the Left.*

In an earlier book, *Revolution in Central Europe*, Carsten showed how much was still to be learnt about the actual nature of the German and Austrian revolutions from a thorough study of the sources and how many accepted interpretations crumble in the face of detailed evidence about what happened in reality rather than in legend. It is interesting and a little surprising that in applying similar methods to the wartime period Carsten discovered that far more archival material was available for Germany than for England. This is not because of the restrictions on the availability of some Home Office files or of what seem to be from Carsten's experience, the obscurity of the present holders of the ILP archives; it is rather because the actual structure of government in Germany meant that several authorities were simultaneously reporting on the state of public opinion and political dissent. Not only did the police, the military and the civilian administration each have their own channels, but each Land government was also compiling its own picture of the situation, so that Carsten has, in addition to the records of the various state governments, also used material in Munich, Hannover, Karlsruhe, Württemberg and elsewhere. Bureaucratic proliferation, even if a hindrance to good government is a help to the historian.

Such moments were gradually to accumulate following his posting to

as well as the focus of Carsten's own earlier work means that there is more detail in this book about Germany than about Britain, there is certainly enough in the chapters on England and Scotland – and Clydeside was a centre of radicalism in the First World War – to suggest more parallels between the two opposed societies than might have been expected. In both countries it was the shortages and restrictions at home rather than directly political motives or discontent at the front which gave the impetus to criticize the government and break the initial mood of national solidarity. In both countries it was the shop stewards who emerged in the factories rather than the official trade union leaders who took the lead in radical opposition. (Such opposition was not always what would now be regarded as progressive: much of the trouble on Clydeside arose from objections to the employment of women in industry so as to release men for the army.) Discontent seems to have been greater among civilians than among soldiers although it was the latter who presumably suffered most. There were complaints about shortages, the rise in the cost of living, "profiteering", a lack of beer – which in Sheffield and Derby caused the authorities some anxiety, since the pubs had to close on Saturday and their customers were exposed to pacifist oratory on the streets, "while in the public houses they are safe from this as the pacifists are generally teetotalers who will not show themselves in these abodes of iniquity". Still, some soldiers began to grumble and Carsten gives interesting examples from Bavaria of men on leave declaring "Liebknecht is absolutely right" in 1916, and he shows that by the late summer of 1918 reports of soldiers from the front were contributing much to the collapse of morale at home. British examples seem to be fewer, but Carsten notes a soldier on leave in Birmingham attending an ILP meeting in

1917 and calling on it to follow the Russian example. For the most part, however, one is struck by the absence of disaffection in the armies, even though there were episodes like the revolt against the military police at Etaples in 1917 and other occasional protests carefully hushed up by the authorities. In Germany the only serious mutinies seem to have been in the navy; and with the high seas fleet confined to its bases, the unrest was more about conditions and inequalities between officers and men than about the continuation of the war.

For all the similarities between Britain and Germany to which Carsten draws our attention, there are big differences. In England, in spite of the nationalist fervour and the hounding of pacifists and disruption of their meetings or the well-known refusal of the seamen to allow Ramsey MacDonald to embark for the international socialist congress in Stockholm in 1917, considerable respect for civil liberties remained and the hounding of pacifists was less than in Germany. The social climate was still such that MacDonald could dine with Lloyd George, while it would have been unthinkable for Hugo Haase to dine with Bethmann-Hollweg. Above all it was the fact that conscription was a new feature in Britain but had for decades been taken for granted in Germany that distinguished the two societies. The introduction of conscription united all opponents of the war in Britain and led them to fear that British society might become more like Germany as a result. "Let us see to it", the ILP pamphlet exhorted, "that while [millions of our sons and brothers] are gone forth to beat back Prussian militarism from our shores, we do not allow a kindred breed of militarism... to lay hold upon our country". It is a quotation which illustrates the essentially ambiguous attitude of the ILP: most of its members did not disapprove of the war as

such; they did not want to criticize those hundreds of thousands who had volunteered for the army; but they were wholly against conscription, and they maintained a continuous criticism of the foreign policy which had led to the war and a concern for the creation of a new international order when the war ended.

Carsten has concentrated on the organized opposition to the two governments which was linked to, even if not completely inspired by, the radical political parties, the ILP in England and the USPD in Germany. He discusses the role of individuals such as Bertrand Russell in so far as they relate to these movements but does not have much to say about the middle-class pacifists such as F. W. Foerster and Ludwig Quidde in Germany, no doubt because they were not very influential: the German military authorities believed that a journey by Quidde to attend a conference in Switzerland was "less dangerous than that of the most harmless member of the USPD". The motives which led people to oppose the government in different degrees were complex and contradictory and the links between opposition to the war and support for revolution not as close as sometimes believed. In Britain any form of pacifism was unpopular and in Professor Carsten's words "the ILP and similar small parties experienced how difficult it was to swim against the current". They lost more support than they gained by their opposition to the war. In Germany, although the success of the left appeared to be much greater, the strength of the radicals had been based on their eagerness to make an end to the war. It did not necessarily follow that the majority of the German working class were ready to make a revolution, in spite of the collapse of October 1918, they were ever in a position to

In the line of duty

By Erik de Mauny

JOHNNIE VON HERWARTH:
Against Two Evils
Memoirs of a Diplomat-Soldier during the Third Reich
318pp. Collins. £10.95.
0 00 216279 2

After an unusual and highly eventful career, the author of these vivid memoirs, written in collaboration with the American historian, Frederick Starr, was appointed the first postwar German Ambassador to London, where he won wide popularity and renown as a leading architect of Anglo-German reconciliation. But few at that time knew that his extraordinary career had been starting as a junior diplomat in the German Embassy in Moscow in the 1930s, progressing into a close and perilous involvement in the wartime resistance to Hitler, and followed by distinguished service in helping to build the political structure of the new Federal Republic. One of the few who did know was Sir Fitzroy Maclean – they had been colleagues in the prewar Moscow diplomatic community – and he contributed a glowing and affectionate introduction to this remarkable tale.

Hans-Heinrich Herwarth von Bittenfeld was born in Berlin in 1904, into a patrician family coming from Augsburg, and numbering a general and a field-marshal among his immediate ancestors. But on a childhood holiday on his grandmother's estate near Oberkirch in Baden, he earned the nickname "Johnnie" from an English visitor, and has been an English visitor, in a way, it could not be more fitting, since it seems to exemplify a certain jaunty attitude to life which never quite deserted him, even in the darkest moments of danger and despair.

Such moments were gradually to accumulate following his posting to

Moscow in 1931. From the start, he had recoiled in disgust from the philosophy of National Socialism. In part, this sprang from having a grandmother of Jewish extraction, which, under the Nazi race laws, made him technically a non-Aryan, and therefore debarred him from advancement in the foreign service; indeed, the fact that he remained in it during the eight years in Moscow was principally due to the protection of successive German ambassadors and other friends in high places. But while he worked conscientiously to further German-Soviet relations, he viewed with growing alarm the unholy alliance of dictatorial interests which led up to the Nazi-Soviet Pact and, at potentially great personal risk, sought to convey warnings of what was going on to British, American and other friends in the Moscow diplomatic community, such as Fitzroy Maclean and "Chip" Bohlen. His account throws much interesting light on that murky period. It is still widely believed, for example, that Stalin favoured the pact with Nazi Germany merely as a means of gaining time. In von Herwarth's version, Stalin viewed Hitler with genuine admiration. In their total ruthlessness, after all, they were not dissimilar: Soviet *Vozhd* calling to Nazi *Führer*, as deep calls to deep; hence Stalin's obdurate refusal to believe in an impending Nazi attack.

When that attack did come, von Herwarth had already left the diplomatic service to join a cavalry regiment: it is reasonable to ask how a man of principle could square his conscience with such service – a question to which this account provides at least a partial answer:

Early in 1942, Hitler was told that the officers of our First Cavalry Division were a gang of old-fashioned anti-Nazis. He cynically replied that, as long as we were willing to die while performing our duties, he would postpone the question of our ultimate fate until the end of the war. It was a char-

acteristic answer and a clever one, too, in that it went to the heart of the dilemma of those officers who opposed Hitler but remained loyal to their duty.

Von Herwarth took part in a number of engagements, but because of his Moscow experience, he became increasingly involved in the formation of volunteer units composed of former Soviet prisoners, particularly of Cossacks and minority peoples of the Caucasus and Crimea, who had initially welcomed the Germans as liberators. It was an enterprise which was completely at odds with the *Lebensraum* theories and brutal practices of people like Himmler and Rosenberg, but it prospered; by 1944, every seventh soldier serving in the German army was a former Soviet prisoner. Many, of course, had switched camps under duress. I remember interrogating Turkoman deserters on the Italian front and soon finding they looked on both their former Soviet and new Nazi masters with impartial loathing.

The most gripping part of von Herwarth's story concerns his gradual involvement with the German military and civil resistance to Hitler. There were a number of plots against the Führer's life, and, in retrospect, all were marked by a strange, burning amateurishness. One, for instance, involved the use of a British bomb (German bombs not being considered sufficiently reliable), and at one tense moment, it had to be dismantled and buried in a forest, where it was quickly unearthed by German secret police with tracker dogs. The boldest attempt was the one personally carried out, on July 20, 1944, by the gallant Count von Stauffenberg – an attempt for which he paid with his life. He was one of a number of senior German officers who were either executed or committed suicide after abortive attempts to overthrow Hitler. Johnnie von Herwarth only escaped sharing their fate by a hairs-breadth. The manner in which he did so forms an exhilarating coda to these memoirs.

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commentary

A gun-metal garden

By Stephen Spender

The Prince of Homburg
Cottesloe Theatre

Heinrich von Kleist, of ancient military Prussian stock, joined the First Foot Guards at Potsdam when young, left after six years and lived a life of restless studying, intermittent earning, editing and writing stories, essays, plays and poems. Everything failed and in 1811 he shot himself together with a girl who was dying of cancer. Like so many other German Romantic poets, his career seems to belong to the dark side of Goethe's sunlit harvest. His writings continue to haunt and trouble us. They have some mysterious affinity with the works of Franz Kafka in our century.

The young Prince of Homburg, hero of this play, is perhaps not so much the portrait of a Romantic dreamer as the persona of the poet imprisoned in his world of the Prussian aristocratic military hierarchy, rather like — though quite opposite to — Prufrock, with his vision of the mermaids, trapped in the world of Bostonian drawing-rooms.

In the opening scene the Prince is in a Paradise of the imagination. Half-awake, reclining on a bench under a tree, he holds a garland of laurel leaves which he places on his brow. Victory and love are the intertwined elements of his age of innocence.

He is interrupted by a torch-bearing search-party consisting of his commander, the Elector of Brandenburg, and the Electress, Princess Natalie, their eldest daughter, Countess Hohenzollern, the Prince's cousin. Here he is — dreaming — when he ought to be at the head of his cavalry, with which for the three previous days he has been in pursuit of the fleeing Swedish army. But instead of reproaching him, the Elector acts in a way symbolic of his dream. He takes the garland from the Prince's brow, winds a gold chain from his own neck round it and hands the garland to the Princess Natalie. The Prince looks up, murmurs "Natalie, my maiden and my bride," then, turning to the Elector, "Frederick, my lord and father," and then, to the Electress, "My gracious mother."

This opening scene stands apart, a microcosm of all the elements of the action, and also a prophetic vision which also takes place in the garden but with what is perhaps a terrible irony, when the Prince of Homburg is indeed hailed as a victor and crowned with the laurel garland by the Elector who blesses his union with Natalie.

But between these two scenes is the sequence of events which forms the narrative of the play. In the second scene, the Prince, still in a trance, scarcely pays heed to the orders given for the next day's battle. And when the battle does take place, still a sleep-walker, he orders and leads the cavalry charge which makes him victor of the Fehrbellin. But in doing so he has acted counter to the orders given by the Elector on the eve of the battle, that he should on no account attack unless he receives specific instructions to do so. He is court-martialled and sentenced to death. He sees his grave being dug and, in a brief moment of complete demoralization — like Claudio pleading with Isabella — begs the Electress to intercede with her husband to save his skin. In answer, the Elector writes him a note stating that if the Prince has cause to think the sentence unjust he has only to write back and say so, and he will at once be reprieved. Reading this, the Prince realizes the force of the justice of the state and he becomes — opposing a threatened revolt of the Army on his behalf — the advocate of his own execution. There follows the final scene in which he is forgiven.

and his dream of the first scene comes true.

It seems to me essential that in a production the absolute contrast between the beginning and ending scenes in the garden and the intervening action be established as strongly as possible. Unfortunately in John Burgess's production this does not happen. Everything, from first to last, takes place against a gun-metal skycloth. There is not a tree or a green patch in the garden. Prussian officers in uniforms and aristocratic Prussian ladies dressed in monochrome Grecian costumes move across the stage among bits of furniture, declaiming rather than speaking their lines, like a procession of figures on a neo-classical *Unter den Linden* frieze. This two-dimensional production, by reducing it to a progression of military events, submerges the real theme of the play, the contrast between the truth which is vision and the dream that comes true as terrible reality.

In the central scene when the Prince looks into his grave, he sees death as a utter annihilation, not as heroic dream-fulfillment. It is the negation of the dream. The awakening from the dream to the reality brings the bitter taste of gun-powder and conformity with the Prussian military hierarchy. At the end, when the Elector removes the bandage from the condemned Prince's eyes and says "Let the cannon's roar waken him", he awakens indeed — to comrades shouting "Long live the Prince of Homburg!" and who go on to yell "to the field" and "into battle" and "stamp in the dust the enemies of Brandenburg!" The difference between the innocent beginning and the jubilant bloodthirsting end of the play is like that between the theme of one of Blake's *Joyous Songs of Innocence* and the same theme echoed in the dust and ashes of the *Songs of Experience*.

Patrick Drury as the Prince of Homburg holds up his profile like a gold Napoleon and speaks his lines clearly, but the style of production gives him little opportunity for exhibiting any symptoms of having an inner life. Robert Urquhart as the Elector gives what is probably the best performance here of an authoritarian who is capable of feeling and imagination. Nicholas Selby is good as Kottwitz the general who has a kind of Wordsworthian natural piety. Lindsay Duncan looks well in the part of Natalie and shows embarrassed pity for the Prince in his object scene of terror and self-pity.

The version of Kleist by John James has the merit that, like the production, it puts across clearly and strongly the essentials of the action. However, it fails to convey either the powerful rhythmic unity of Kleist or his hard, severe, clean-cut imagery.

The *Prince of Homburg* is written in iambic pentameters, which are certainly difficult to translate from German poetry into English without their sounding like bad English blank verse. All the same an English-style has somehow to be invented which has, or which suggests, a rhythm strong and assured as a movement *alla marcia* in a Beethoven or Schubert symphony. Consider the opening lines, spoken by Hohenzollern:

Der Prinz von Homburg, unser tapferster Vetter,
Der an der Router Spitze, seit drei Tagen
Den flüchtigen Schweden munter nachsetzt,
Und sich erst heute wieder stemmt
Im Hauptquartier zu Fehrbellin gezeigt.

In the prompt version with which the theatre provided me, John James makes of this:

Der Prinz von Homburg, unser tapferster Vetter,
Der an der Router Spitze, seit drei Tagen
Den flüchtigen Schweden munter nachsetzt,
Und sich erst heute wieder stemmt
Im Hauptquartier zu Fehrbellin gezeigt.

at the head of your cavalry the Prince of Homburg, our courageous cousin.

reappeared at headquarters here at Fehrbellin only today quite out of breath

This is accurate, but it has neither rhythm nor style, it is neither prose nor verse.

As well as a clanging, almost iron, rhythm, there is literalness of imagery and metaphor in Kleist, admittedly very difficult to put into English but this kind of thing, by Mr James, seems fluffed and blurred at the edges:

now goddess of th' illustrious sphere
with aura drifting
off your crest
a lifting tail
in a tenuous breath
that touches my hair
as down to me here
you do revolve

where the German runs:

Nun denn, auf deiner Kugel, Un-
geheures
Du, der der Windeshauch den Schilde-
heit,
Gleich einem Segel läßt, roll heran!
Du hast mir, Glück, die Locken schon
gestreift.

Perhaps impossible to translate, but surely what should be conveyed is the feeling that behind Kleist's verbal imagery there is an almost machine-like articulated model, as in English metaphysical poetry. An English version of Kleist requires a consistent and unified style, authoritative imagery and magnificent rhythm. Perhaps this is too much to ask, but the weakness of the Cottesloe production is probably to be traced mostly to the English text.

Dream children

By Harold Hobson

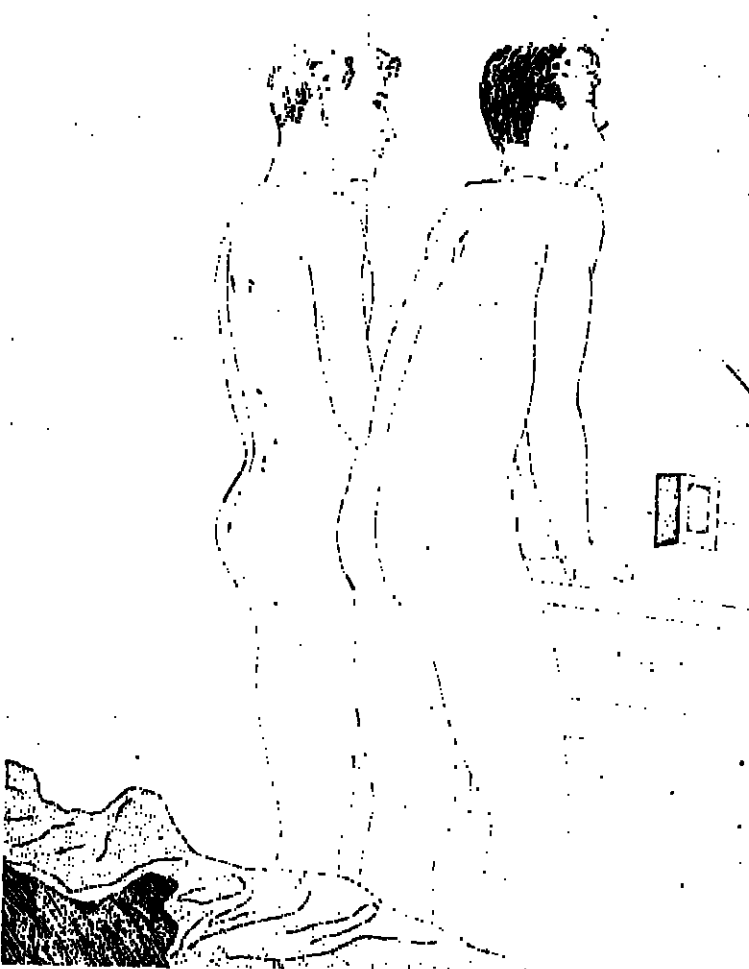
Francis Kilvert
Lyttelton Theatre

To his platform performance of *Francis Kilvert* Timothy Davies challenges and the subtitle "Victorian" and no doubt somewhere the ghost of Lewis Carroll gratefully applauds. For though no overt word is said on the subject Davies, under the guise of a simple, even religious, sense of wonder at the loveliness of hills and meadows. He found satisfaction in visiting his parishioners, even if they were old and shrunken and mad. The sight of a pretty girl left behind on a station platform as his train swept by gave him a deep pleasure. Mr Davies rocks with a marvellous internal laughter as Kilvert recalls some story told him by clerical friends of which he alone can perceive the transcendent humour; he conveys a feeling of quiet joy at summer tea-parties on lawns smoothly shaven. What shocks us, of course, is his delight in looking at the bottoms of naked little girls.

This was the abiding sorrow of Kilvert's life, though it is never mentioned except in Davies's single piercing cry, and in the solemn look of grief which follows it. But in spite of it Kilvert had many consolations. He had a capacity for rejoicing in, and describing, the beauties of landscape, and Mr Davies beautifully communicates Kilvert's simple, even religious, sense of wonder at the loveliness of hills and meadows. He found satisfaction in visiting his parishioners, even if they were old and shrunken and mad. The sight of a pretty girl left behind on a station platform as his train swept by gave him a deep pleasure. Mr Davies rocks with a marvellous internal laughter as Kilvert recalls some story told him by clerical friends of which he alone can perceive the transcendent humour; he conveys a feeling of quiet joy at summer tea-parties on lawns smoothly shaven. What shocks us, of course, is his delight in looking at the bottoms of naked little girls.

Davies, a tall, imposing presence in a Victorian cutaway coat, wearing a bushy black beard, does not, so far as I can tell, utter anything that is not freely set down without reticence in William Plomer's edition of the *Diary of the Rev Francis Kilvert*. Kilvert was born in 1840 and educated at Oxford, where there is a slight chance that he knew Lewis Carroll, one of whose tastes (not that for mathematics) he most undoubtedly shared. He became a curate in Wales and fell in love with a charming girl of nineteen, whose father refused his request for an engagement on the ground that his prospects were unsatisfactory. Kilvert married another lady in 1878, and died five weeks later of peritonitis.

The sadness of his life (which otherwise was filled with a joy that borders upon ecstasy) is not so much that he was never allowed, as a gentleman, to show any sign of love to the enchanting, and, light-hearted Daisy but that this being so, he never had a child in the culminating moment of a performance it would not be wrong to describe as purifying. Mr Davies utters a cry of anguish for the daughter who will never be borne to him, which in its abandonment to passionate regret is as moving as the ending of Lamb's essay on "Dream Children", when Elia says that "the children of Alice call Harbottle father", and that his



"Quarter", a previously unpublished etching from David Hockney's *Cavafy Suite* of 1966, in the exhibition Hockney and Poetry at Michael Parkin Fine Art Ltd, 11 Motcomb St, London SW1, until June 12.

own must wait on the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before they have existence and a name.

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Everything depends, of course, on the actor's interpretation of this aspect of Kilvert's nature. Our age thinks itself permissive; nevertheless, it considers Carroll to have been subject to a perversion. It may defend the perversion, but the defence is proof of a feeling of guilt, as the stain exists. Mr Davies does not

take this attitude; his performance is a model of rectitude and complete innocence. Not once does he allow the thought of abnormality or sin to enter our minds; he presents us with a portrait of absolute purity. By the side of his picture of the Victorian age, ours seems puritan, frightened, filthy.

These platform performances at the National Theatre contain some of the finest and most original work now being done on the British stage. This work remains unknown to the vast majority of theatregoers because it gets little publicity, which is explicable by the fact that many productions get only one or two performances, though often they are revived later. Thus the work of exceptionally fine players all too often gets but a poor reward. Admirers of the National would greatly enrich their experience if they made a regular habit of visiting these (cheap) performances. Occasionally there would be disappointments; but many times there would be a brilliant surprise.

GOD COMANY
DOUGLAS HARPER

Douglas Harper, sociologist, photographer, and Carl long-time tramp, were companions on an extraordinary journey across America into the world of tramps, migration, skid rows and hobo jungles and hard work. It is a world of violence, hobo life, and freedom are still possible. It is a world of life, that will soon disappear. Carl describes how they met, telling tales, sharing experiences, and parting. Harper's own evocative

The University Press
126 Buckingham Palace Road
London SW1W 9SD

Twitching townie

By William Boyd

The Grass Is Singing
Odeon, Kensington High Street

The Grass Is Singing was Doris Lessing's first novel and was published in 1949. Director Michael Raeburn, in his first full-length film, has been remarkably faithful to the book, apart from two relatively unimportant deviations. First, he has updated the setting to 1960, and second, the Rhodesian background has been replaced by one that appears superficially South African. Neither alteration is very significant for, although the book concerns a relationship between a white woman and a black servant, the broader socio-political analogies don't shout for attention. The emphasis of the drama is essentially a private and personal one, largely remote — both physically and psychologically — from the collective madness of apartheid.

Karen Black plays the central character, Mary, a rather prim secretary no longer in the first flush of youth, who, in a moment of quiet desperation, rushes into marriage with a taciturn farmer, Dick Turner (John Thaw). Turner's inefficient farm is miles out in the bush. He lives in primitive bachelor squalor and doggedly persists in outdated farming methods, sure one day that his luck will turn and his steadily accumulating debts will be no more.

Only briefly daunted, Mary sets to work and transforms the interior of the farmhouse into something domestic and more acceptable. However, the day-to-day quality of her life can't be improved quite so easily. She's a "townie" — in her husband's term — and she unthinkingly imports her own notions of propriety into the easy-going household. The victims of this new regime are the black cooks and houseboys, whom she swiftly alienates and then sacks.

Slowly the poverty and ramshackle nature of her married life begin to get her down. In a moment of despair she runs away, but finds it impossible to resume her old life in the town. The first signs of mental imbalance make themselves manifest — played to the distracted flinching of Karen Black. Numb and disoriented she accompanies the taciturn Turner back to the town. Life, though, continues to deal up its raw nerve for native workers which they re-lyonise to decline to patronize. Turner falls ill with malaria and she has to take over the running of the farm, in which capacity her intransigence and thoughtless discipline quickly lose her the loyalty of the work-force.

With her husband bed-ridden and helpless she comes more and more to

rely on the latest in her succession of houseboys, Moses (John Kani), with whom she strikes up a curious and intimate relationship. It has its sexual undertones, but these remain always implicit. As Mary cracks under the strain and slides into madness under the appalling pressures of her life, Moses becomes a guardian and support — he brushes her hair, even dresses her — a situation that is deeply offensive to her white neighbours.

The relationship is not merely one-sided. For Moses it comes with its full share of trust and reciprocity; to such an extent, indeed, that he sees Mary's final departure (for some kind of hospital one assumes: she's almost completely deranged) as an act of betrayal and kills her.

In the novel the unusual relationship between Mary and Moses is subtly and credibly conveyed. But without the crucial benefit of this knowledge the final half of the film must seem increasingly incomprehensible. This is largely due to the novel's overzealous respect for the voice of reflection or omniscient comment in the book is left unspoken in the film. As is so often proved when fiction is directly recast in another medium, a respectful adaptation can often do a disservice to the original. By declining to write additional explanatory dialogue the actors have to rely on increasingly desperate mute expressions and the burden of interpretation left on the viewer becomes impossibly heavy, a constant racking of one's brain in an effort to divine the significance of every twitching facial contour or soulful gaze. The bafflement, what is it that draws Moses to Mary? Why does he feel he has to kill her? And why, moreover, in some sort of shamanistic way that involves donning a lion skin? Tribal ritual? Some sort of penance? It's commendable if a film takes the audience back to the book, but it shouldn't be in search of vital explanations.

Otherwise Raeburn has made a respectable directorial debut. He is well served by magnificent Zambian scenery and strong performances from John Thaw and John Kani. Karen Black's role, however, is more problematic. It appears, in essence, a piece of miscasting. She manages the accent surprisingly well, but seems quite wrong for the part. As she goes mad, so her performance leans dangerously close to self-parody or even high camp, and, unfortunately, images of her playing a demented stevedore in one of the *Alperton* films ("I'd really like this plane alone!") kept edging themselves persistently into my head.

With her husband bed-ridden and helpless she comes more and more to

Excellent browsing and sluicing

By Eric Korn

A Celebration of P. G. Wodehouse
Lyttelton Theatre Foyer

"O INCOMPARABLE JEEVES", "LEI E UNICO, JEEVES", "SU-PERDUPERT, JEEVES", insist the polyglot dust-wrappers: "UTIMBER-KET, JEEVES", "UPP MED HAXAN, JEEVES", they thunder, while the Master confides to a friend in gratified bewilderment: "I can't imagine why these Swedes like my stuff, but apparently they are never happier than when curled up with it."

If your happiness is similarly achieved, you can do no better than shimmer along to the South Bank; in the foyer of the Lyttelton Theatre a celebration of P. G. Wodehouse. It continues until May 22. In addition to a cornucopia of the works in all languages living, the dead (if "Gratias ago tibi Jeeves" doesn't exist yet, it soon will) and as yet unborn (Eperanto), there are letters, manuscripts, programmes and stills of Wodehouse and his dealings with the familiar and unfamiliar. "Adapted from the Hungarian by P. G. Wodehouse" is a bit of a fact, but there it is alongside an adaptation of Sacha Guitry by Stephen Powys and Guy Bolton. ("Stephen Powys" confides a slightly puzzling caption, "is a pseudonym for Guy Bolton, which in this case is used by P. G. Wodehouse.")

There is Wodehouse for the stage, for the large and small screen; and a good deal about the one major Hollywood effort, "Damsel in Distress", which involved Fred Astaire, Joan Fontaine and Burns and Allen. Despite this, the result was unhappy, "a mess which for some reason is still shown occasionally on American television and causes TV sets to be switched off hurriedly in homes from the rock-bottom shores of Maine to the Everglades of Florida," wrote P. G. W. in his nineties, with irritation undimmed by the years. (Or perhaps the irritation was assumed, for the dead (if "Gratias ago tibi Jeeves" doesn't exist yet, it soon will) and as yet unborn (Eperanto), there are letters, manuscripts, programmes and stills of Wodehouse and his dealings with the familiar and unfamiliar. "Adapted from the Hungarian by P. G. Wodehouse" is a bit of a fact, but there it is alongside an adaptation of Sacha Guitry by Stephen Powys and Guy Bolton. ("Stephen Powys" confides a slightly puzzling caption, "is a pseudonym for Guy Bolton, which in this case is used by P. G. Wodehouse.")

describing how he could not bear to read it, was cancelled and replaced by one which explained that contrary to what you might think, he read it with the same "pleasant" zeal! he brought to the task of rereading all his books.)

A huge photomontage of a spurious signpost indicates the chief proper names of Wodehouse: Bmsworth and Brancaster and Fakenham/Lakenham and the bishopric of Bognor; there is earnest debate on the location ("somewhere near Bridgnorth") of Blandings Castle; and there is a fine gallery of portraits of its Empress. Alas Peggy Bacon's porker is chubby and pink, which literary pig-fanciers will know for a solecism: others offer a true portrait of the super pig in all her black Berkshire glory.

The final platform performance of *Words by Wodehouse* will take place at the Olivier Theatre at 5.45 on May 21. David Ryall plays Wodehouse, and recalls songs and characters from his early career in American musical comedy, with music by Jerome Kern.

Artisan as artist

By J. B. Donne

Festival of India
Commonwealth Institute

Survival, revival or death are no longer options open to traditional arts and crafts of the world, but their three possible destinies. In the West, death has supervened; articles created by "craftspeople" are usually too expensive or too useless to count as genuine craft products, while they seldom achieve the qualities demanded of works of art. In Eastern Europe and other socialist countries where governments are reviving their "national cultures", crafts have become divorced from the peoples they are supposed to represent and are directed towards the exotic requirements of tourists and the export market, in which foreign currency has the upper hand over cultural propaganda.

Only in those developing countries whose rural areas remain most underdeveloped do the traditional arts and crafts survive in a state of authenticity. In India, political and social changes have brought about the downfall of the extravagant rulers and landlords whose patronage supported a luxury art of court regalia and lavish oriental *haute couture* which has now disappeared or reached down to village level, where life remains at an economic nadir. As Asok Mitra so clearly points out in the catalogue to the recent exhibition, *The Arts of Bengal and Eastern India*, at the Commonwealth Institute (£2, 104pp), the qualities of function, economy and honesty of treatment are of no importance to the serendipitous collector or the overseas buyer. It is pathetic to see the technical skills that have been handed down over generations being squandered to satisfy a foreign or even local urban market for articles that will be displayed as folk art or curios and never put to practical use.

As a result, many village artisans, unable to conceive any purpose for such work beyond their own personal gain, often produce designs without meaning and forms without life. On the other hand, weaving and pottery, essential handicrafts in the lives of the majority of Indians today, are thriving. On display, and for sale, was a wide range of Indian and Western costumes. Presumably size and inconvenience of vertical looms and pit-ooms precluded any demonstration of Indian weaving. But this was redeemed by the rarer spectacle of a block-printer at work. The wood-blocks themselves are

works of art, the craftsmanship with which the intricate designs are carved far exceeding that displayed in the copying of ritual masks or plaques showing mythological figures for the tourist trade.

However, it is traditional styles and designs that ultimately appeal to Westerners, however much they may differ from Western concepts, rather than those most influenced by Western ideas. The former show India through Indian eyes; the latter are an attempt on the part of the Indian designer to see India through European eyes, and are thereby doomed to failure. Indeed, self-assurance of the traditional craftsman is often undermined by the ambivalence of the modern designer. Again, as Asok Mitra says:

All that we can now do is to master the traditional techniques and employ individual talent for the proper understanding of the tradition and its transformation or adaptation to the functions of modern life and its domestic components. Only then can certain conventions grow healthily; only then can we get away from the pursuit of superficial Indianness.

One example of this being achieved was to be seen in the performance of the young, beautiful and technically superb dancer of Bharata Natyam, Alamel Valli. This is the oldest form of Indian classical dance and the tradition is believed to go back to Vedic times. In the second century AD it was codified by Bharata Muni in the *Natya Sastra*, which laid down rules for the various facial expressions, hand gestures and movements of the body, including the neck, eyes and eyebrows. Originally the style of temple dancing of Southern India performed by the *devadasis*, who were dedicated to temple service from childhood, it had degenerated by the end of the last century to a stage spectacle, often performed for the amusement of Europeans. It has since been revived in a form thought to approximate the classical tradition, which demands years of training in music and song as well as the dance itself. But this has been achieved only at the cost of considerable secularization. It is one of the great strengths of Alamel Valli that she is able at times to remind one that Bharata Natyam is not merely a form of entertainment but an act of worship.

Further events in the Commonwealth Institute's programme include plays, seminars and a book exhibition, and performances, an exhibition and workshop provided by the Academy of Indian Dance. They offer a wide-ranging survey of the state of cultural life in India today.

New Oxford books: History

The Escape from Elba

The Fall and Flight of Napoleon 1814-1815
Norman MacKenzie

There have been many biographies of Napoleon, but in this account of his first exile Napoleon appears not as a Man of Destiny but scaled down to human size, his field of action no longer the whole of Europe but the comic-opera kingdom of Elba, where he acted the role of the great commander, the lawgiver, the patron of the arts and sciences. £12.50 3 June

The Murdered Magicians

Peter Partner

The history of the Knights Templar has long been overshadowed by the cloudy circumstances in which the Order ended. This book seeks to describe the medieval Knights Templar and their trial fairly and informatively, and to analyse the strange beliefs that have grown up about them — about their wealth, their supposed hidden knowledge, their occult powers — in modern times. Illustrated £12.95 20 May

An Introduction to the History of English Medieval Towns

Susan Reynolds

'Admirably judicious survey of the major themes in medieval English urban history', 'an excellent work of highly imaginative and realistic synthesis'. *History*. First published in 1977, this book is now available in a paperback edition. £5.95 20 May

Charters and Customs of the Abbey of Holy Trinity, Caen

Edited by Marjorie Chibnall

The English estates of the Abbey of Holy Trinity, Caen, included manors situated in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds, East Anglia, and Wiltshire. This volume contains surveys for the whole estate made in the reigns of Henry I and Henry II, thirteenth-century customs for Melton, and twenty-six charters and leases. They provide valuable evidence of social conditions and changing methods of estate exploitation, and are printed for the first time. £12.50 British Academy

Lloyds Bank 1918-1969

J.R. Winton

This book sets out the history of Lloyds Bank from 1918 to 1969, when Sir Eric Faulkner succeeded Sir Harold Peck as chairman. It is a sequel to Professor Sayer's *Lloyds Bank in the History of English Banking*, published in 1957 and now out of print, which recorded the story from the establishment of the bank in 1785 up to the end of the First World War. £16 27 May

Oxford University Press

Behind the lines

"I can't stand bloody Lodge, and I can't stand bloody Drabble."

"Then what are you doing here? They're the only people appearing tonight."

"Oh, I only come for the drinks." This authentic piece of dialogue from the Lancaster Literature Festival has the added piquancy of being an exchange between an anonymous festival-goer and David Lodge himself, as they stood side by side in the gents before Lodge gave his public reading. Literary Festivals are supposed to be all about opportunities for encounters between writers and readers, but the opportunities for extending the bar licence seem an equal incentive.

The Literary Festival season is well under way. "Writing '82" at Lancaster and the Oxford Poetry Festival are behind us; the exiguous Cley Little Festival of Poetry concludes this weekend. Oxford provided an opportunity for a meeting of the newly-formed Literature Festivals Council. Originally, this was to consist of ten Festivals, but although it advertises itself in the Arts Council's catalogue, *Festivals in Great Britain*, as "the world's most comprehensive arts festival", the Edinburgh International Festival rather embarrassingly had to drop out, since there is no literary content in the official programme this year. Instead, there is a conference on state patronage of the arts; next year they promise a book fair.

The surviving members of the Literature Festivals Council are: besides Oxford and Lancaster: Ilkley

(July), St Ives (September), Cheltenham (October), Newcastle (October), Kent (October), Essex (October) and the Cambridge Poetry Festival in April 1983. The formation of the Council is a sign of the increasing professionalization of literary festivals - and the need to co-ordinate their activities. Is it a good idea to have four of them in the same month?

The Council has been brought together through the good offices of the Director of the Poetry Society's National Poetry Secretariat, Pamela Clunies-Ross. The Poetry Secretariat subsidizes many of the appearances by poets at Festivals, and it was plain that some means of communication between the promoters was necessary. So now she organizes the Literature Festivals Council as well.

But do Literary Festivals do anyone any good? Pamela Clunies-Ross is convinced that they are worth while, primarily because of the contact between writer and reader. (Presumably these are normally at a higher level than that experienced by David Lodge.) Seeing authors in the flesh makes "writing, and therefore books, seem part of normal human activity." Writers do not make much money from their participation, although Ilkley is reported to have paid as much as £500 for a star turn. But they do enjoy meeting each other, and an appearance has a healthy effect on book sales.

Or at least it would do, if only publishers were more enthusiastic, and more efficient, about getting their authors' books on display. This

is one of the problems the Literature Festivals Council hopes to overcome. Other concerns are the proper publicizing and marketing of Festivals - in other words getting people as well as poets to turn up. (This seemed to be a difficulty at Lancaster.) It is also hoped to do something to stimulate commercial sponsorship, which is patchy, and local at best.

The quest for a commercial sponsor lies at the heart of a plot for a new Literary Festival whose scope and budget overshadows all others. Proposals are now circulating for a London Literary Festival costing £2 million over five years.

The project is the brain-child of Desmond Clarke, Director of the Publishers' Association's Book Marketing Council. His scheme outlines a book week featuring "a minimum of fifteen highly publicized, highly attractive events a day", from Byron at the Barbican to cookery books in the kitchens of the Dorchester. (Some of the people named in the proposals might be surprised to know what they are listed as doing. The Institute of Contemporary Arts was astonished to learn that it would be hosting a Festival Forum.)

Desmond Clarke states that "authors have never had the public acclaim of other contributors to the arts", and this effort to establish not just a national, but an international Literary Festival in London must be welcomed. But there remains the matter of the £2 million. Some of

this is expected to come from ticket sales, the sale of television and radio rights worldwide, and other forms of franchising. The Arts Council, the British Council and all their friends and relations will be approached. The major sponsor, however, will have to be a very generous international company, ideally one with interests in communications.

Clarke names no names, but he says that a number of companies have expressed interest. If these talks are successful, then a Festival Trust will be set up. (I note that no writers are on the informal committee currently at work.) The first Festival will be held at Easter 1984 or 1985. In the meantime, the BBC has become so enthused with the idea that it is holding its own Literary Festival of the Air this October.

Further afield, though closer in time and reality, is "Britain Salutes New York", a British Arts Festival to be held in New York in the Spring and Summer of 1983. The British American Arts Association has its sponsors and performers all lined up - until it comes to literature. The organizers do not seem to have taken Desmond Clarke's view that English Literature is "arguably the largest and most glorious artistic contribution ever made to civilization."

So far, the literary element in what Sir Hugh Casson calls "the most ambitious celebration of British arts, culture and life ever held outside the UK" is only a vague plan for

"a British novelist, a British dramatist, and a British poet" to appear at the Poetry Center, at the Young Men's Hebrew Association on 92nd Street. These single representatives of fiction, drama and poetry, who have not yet been decided upon, are being dealt with under "fringe events".

The organizers recognize that literature is one of the gaps in their programme, whereas Mobil Oil is presenting the Queen's Holbein Collection at the Pierpont Morgan Library, and the National Westminster Bank is backing the Monteverdi Choir. Since the Poetry Center can, and does, attract audiences of 2,000, would some of those printing and publishing companies that have been announcing such good business recently consider sponsoring Lodge or Drabble?

The Literature Advisory Panel of the Arts Council has decided to withdraw its support for three literary prizes awarded by the Crime Writers' Association. This year the Arts Council gave £2,550 to "top up" the Golden Dagger awards for fiction and non-fiction, and the John Creasey first novel award. The reason apparently is that the panel does not consider detective stories to be literature as the panel chooses to define it. In the light of the known fondness for the genre of the panel's chairman, Margherita Laski, the Crime Writers are mystified.

Robert Hewison

to the editor

Public Lending Right

Sir, - Writers and illustrators will be glad of Robert Hewison's warning (Behind the Lines, April 16) that publishers are again making a grab for Public Lending Right.

While PLR was going through Parliament, the then Minister for the Arts declared: "I am sure that the publishers will recognize, along with everyone else, that the PLR is being established at public expense for the benefit of authors alone."

Besides forgetting or ignoring that, the Publishers Association has conceived the notion that a publisher can act on behalf of (that is, take a percentage off) authors in their dealings with PLR. Happily, any such proceeding is prevented by the PLR rules, which require parliamentary approval in April this year. The application for a book to be registered must be made by the author. Payments will go directly, and secretly, to him. True, he can assign the PLR in a book; but if he does, he must assign it whole, in the sense that he cannot keep a percentage while assigning a percentage to someone else.

It is, therefore, only through the publisher-author contract that a publisher could seek a percentage of PLR. A clause that obliged the author to send the publisher every year a cheque representing a portion of the PLR the author had received (or in years when he received none) a nil statement would be tiresome and perhaps sometimes impossible for the publisher to enforce. Any publisher who gets such a clause into contracts and who then forces the author to pay up will have done some hefty bullying and will have picked his victims with precision from among authors who are beginners or paupers or unprotected by trade unions and agents.

If publishers believe they have a case for being paid by public funds when books they have published are lent out from public libraries, then let them campaign to persuade Parliament to set aside money for that purpose. It may take time and energy. Thirty-one years have passed since PLR for writers was first proposed in Britain, by my father. Meanwhile, the simple ethics of the playground are in this case correct: if you want a lolly, ask for one on your own account and don't bully a weaker child into yielding you a lick of his.

BRIGID BROPHY.

Flat 3, 185 Old Brompton Road, London SW5.

Emily Dickinson

Sir, - That Emily Dickinson should begin to keep her poems in some sort of order when she began to write copiously and seriously seems the most natural thing in the world, and is the simplest explanation of the fascicles that she began to sew together c1858. There are a couple of difficulties in this simple picture, but not of a kind to warrant plunging for "the probable importance of the fascicles as artistic constructs" rather than as mere devices of a desperate orderliness. Indeed, these difficulties (the appearance in F34 of a poem we know to have been written a year or two earlier, the duplication of seventeen poems) suggest only that Dickinson's orderliness was not very thorough (not perhaps sufficiently "desperate"). We can say at best that the order of the fascicles and sets is much the closest we have got to a chronological ordering, and probably as close as we will ever get.

This might seem inherently less interesting than Rosenthal's "artistic constructs" to his "organic structure" or "The Waste Land" or one of Pound's groupings of Cantos, a "double sequence" like one (or two) of Yeats; but when one puts together

these scattered phrases, it seems that Rosenthal is more interested in assimilating Dickinson to some view of modernity than in looking for any order or orderings peculiar to these fascicles and sets; indeed, she becomes "along with Whitman but unbeknown to either, his fellow-inventor of the modern lyrical sequence".

Certainly an attentive reading of the poems in this order will reveal significant groupings that had been lost with the breaking-up of the fascicles, but without exception these seem to me most readily intelligible as manifesting haphazardly Dickinson's immediate preoccupations (F33 is a good example). That no doubt makes them "organic" enough; and the "larger structure" that Rosenthal senses is, I suppose, the development of a remarkable talent over nearly two decades.

All this seems worth saying because views like Professor Rosenthal's partly underlie the decision to publish the "manuscript books" alone, and such views threaten to pose an obstacle to understanding even greater than the long-running brouhaha about accidentals. In my view, what is most needed is not "a reader's edition of the fascicles alone", but a reader's edition of the complete poems, making full use of Rosenthal's reduction, by an editor prepared to collate and to make rational decisions about punctuation, capitalization and, indeed, lineation.

EVAN JONES.

English Department, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia.

Hellenistic Poetry

Sir, - Charles Segal (Letters, April 23) accuses me of "misleading inaccuracies" in my review of his *Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral* (April 2). He protests against my saying "that too little attention is paid in the Callimachean and the rest of Hellenistic poetry; his index, he claims, 'lists seventeen references' to Callimachus, and more than thirty to other Hellenistic poets."

In fact Segal's index refers to fourteen allusions to Callimachus in his 348 pages. Nine of them are to the opening of the *Aetia*; only three other passages of his poetry are mentioned. In a large book on Hellenistic poetry I found that surprising.

References to other poets tend to a similar thinness. The reader who actually looks up those index entries (certainly the book is excellently indexed) will understand, I think, why I said that the pastoral poems are impoverished by being treated too much as separate entities, with too little specific reference to the large body of Hellenistic poetry outside them.

JASPER GRIFFIN.

Balliol College, Oxford.

Los Angeles Freeways

Sir, - Reynier Banham, in his review of David Brodsky's *L.A. Freeway* (April 23), gives us Joan Didion's "most quoted passage" about a point in the Los Angeles freeway system "where successful passage from the Hollywood into the Harbor required a diagonal move across four lanes of traffic" leaving her heroine "exasperated". After reading this, I got into my car and, as I have been doing for the last fifteen years, drove from my home to my office, taking first the Hollywood Freeway and then the Harbor. As always, the transition required no lane change whatever. I stayed in the lane I found myself in after entering the Hollywood, and eventually was automatically transferred to the Harbor.

After the transition to the Harbor, if you do not wish to make an exit to downtown LA - as many office-workers using the Harbor Freeway do - you should then shift to the adjacent lane on your left, or course, if you're in search of exclu-

sive, you can try Ms Didion's manoeuvre, and dart diagonally across the second, third and fourth lanes further to the left - first making sure the California Highway Patrol isn't there to give you a ticket; it rightly frowns on rapid, dangerous and unnecessary lane-changing.

The passage, Banham says, provides "the first truly effective literary metaphor constructed out of the Los Angeles townscape". Effective only on those unfamiliar with the terrain. For exhilaration derived from nerve-racking required lane-changing, give me a good old-fashioned English roundabout any day.

DONALD GREENE.
English Department, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California 90007.

Gene Stratton-Porter

Sir, - I share Holly Elley's affection for Gene Stratton-Porter's *Girl of the Limberlost*, mentioned in her review (March 26) of Mildred D. Taylor's fine *Let the Circle Be Unbroken*. Some misstatements in the review about Stratton-Porter and her books deserve correcting, though.

Gene Stratton-Porter (with a hyphen) set her (not "his") *Limberlost* novels in northern Indiana (not "the deep South") in the first fifteen years or so of this century (not "during the Depression"). The best of them all, *Laddie*, a fictionalized account of her own childhood, takes place in the 1870s.

Many episodes centre around spunky kids; and, as a child in the 1930s, I liked my grandmother to read those chapters aloud to me. But in a quiet way, the book revolutionizes historical studies of Ohio among the "classics" of American children's literature. These best-sellers were aimed at, and found, an audience of youths and adults. James D. Hart, in *The Popular Book: A History of American Literary Taste* (University of California Press, 1950, recently reissued in paperback), gives a good account of the reasons for the book's tremendous sales during and after World War I.

KAREN REEDS.
University of California Press, 2223 Fulton Street, Berkeley, California 94720.

King's College Library, Cambridge

Sir, - Internal alterations will be made to King's College Library this summer and autumn, in order to improve facilities for readers of the Research Collections. As a result we shall have temporarily to close the Library to scholars wishing to consult medieval or modern manuscripts or certain classes of printed books. We regret very much any inconvenience that this may cause. The closure will begin on July 1, 1982, and it is hoped that we shall be able to reopen on December 6, 1982.

This closure will be in addition to our annual closure during the undergraduate examination period, which will run this year from May 3 to June 11.

Readers wishing to consult the Collections outside the closed periods are, of course, always welcome to do so, and should write, as usual, giving at least one week's notice of their intended visit.

P. J. CROFT.
M. A. HALLS.
King's College, Cambridge.

Down by the riverside

By Humphrey Carpenter

MARY PRIOR:
Fisher Row
Fishermen, Bargemen, and Canal Boatmen in Oxford, 1500-1900
406pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £22.50.
0 19 82249 7

Hopkins, who dismissed Oxford's outer streets as "a base and brickish skirt", really ought to have taken a second look. Just at the time he was writing, a waterside lane that lies on an arm of the Thames by Hythe Bridge, between the colleges and the railway station, was passing through the third and final phase of a colourful existence that stretched back at least to the sixteenth century. Fisher Row in the 1870s was the home of the city's canal boatmen. A century earlier, the Thames bargemen who took their odd flat-bottomed craft up the Upper River and Lechlade (a district so remote that they used to call it "the West Country") had made their homes in the Row. And before their time, Fisher Row had indeed been "Fish Row", as it has often been called by its inhabitants; for it housed the fishermen who got a living, meagre enough at times, by providing fresh-water catches from Thames and Cherwell for the tables of the university during compulsory fast days. The fishermen, in fact, were dependent on the university, and vice versa; indeed, between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, the number of apprentices taken on by the fishermen rose and fell in almost exact ratio to the number of students at the colleges.

This is just one of many such eye-opening facts unearthed by Mary Prior in her work of "micro-history". In a quiet way, the book revolutionizes historical studies of Oxford, both city and university, and the relations between them. Dr Prior tells us she began it almost by accident; setting out to study the history of canal-boat decorative painting, she found herself drawn into the mysteries of those waterside communities which many towns once possessed, and which had one foot in urban and other in river life. By a stroke of fortune, one of the best documented of such communities was virtually on her own doorstep, its history being traceable not just through parish records and *Jackson's Oxford Journal* but also discernible in the margins of monastic and university chronicles, and in not a small number of literary works.

Fisher Row certainly has its literary associations. Robert Burton was once the vicar of the parish in which it stands, St Thomas's, and in this century Evelyn Waugh drank in the Nag's Head, the former boatmen's pub which stands in the middle of the Row. (For most of its history there were at least three pubs there, even though you can walk down it in fewer than three minutes; and there is also a brewery at one end, for good measure.) Moreover the fishermen who were the Row's founders were not necessarily unlettered. We learn from Dr Prior's pages that "John Wodeson, the fisherman, was son of Nicholas Wodeson, wharf-owner, and Superior Bedell of Theology... He himself was a fisherman and Interior Bedell of Arts. His stepmother married the sixth President of St John's. One of his sisters married the seventh President, and the other a substantial plumber. He was uncle to a bishop... Admittedly, Wodeson was among the grander residents of the Row; but down at the other end the Tawney family could rival his connections and accomplishments - R. H. Tawney was descended from them, while one Robert Mounson, a plumber who lived in a tenement not far from the Tawney house, owned a pair of virginals, which as Dr Prior observes "suggests something of the varied world in which he lived".

"A wall of silence divides us from the world of ordinary men and women before about 1820", Dr Prior observes early in the book, and she herself is the first to admit that she has not entirely pulled that wall down. This of course is frustrating in the course of the 350 pages of text of *Fisher Row* we learn so much and yet so little. It is rather like finding a photograph album of one's ancestors that lacks captions. Through Dr Prior's pages parade a succession of Bossons, Beesleys, Tawneys, Wodesons, Beauchamps and all the other families who lived in the Row for generations after generation; but though we hear of their births, marriages, deaths and wills, there are few moments at which we can really enter into their lives. It must also be said that there is, or seems to be, a degree of repetition in the book; or perhaps it is merely that the material inevitably has the appearance of repetition, so much did the same things happen to the same families again and again down the generations. Against this, Dr Prior writes with a vigour and wit that carries her readers over almost every longueur.

The book will be valuable in several fields. Students of the history of river usage - an under-studied subject which throws a remarkable amount of light on economic and social conditions - will be grateful to Dr Prior for her detailed record of the disputes between the Castle Mill and Osney Mill, both of which were near the Row and affected its fortunes. The Castle Mill was the town's preserve; Osney was monastic, and eventually passed into the hands of Christ Church. The dispute (which involved the erection of weirs, the digging of semi-illicit channels, and all the other forms of interference that could be found up and down the Thames long before the time of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*) was therefore a prime example of Town vs. Gown. Historians of the university will value this, and will prize the information that the Vice-Chancellor's men could seize fish from wholesalers if they thought it too highly priced. (North Oxford must regret the passing of those days.) The book is also a minor classic of social history, especially the history of the family. Such little occupational communities as Fisher Row were, of course, characteristic of pre-industrial Britain and it is illuminating to discover that, within them, the extended family seems to have been the rule. Fisher Row was, as Prior observes, "a sort of large household under many adjacent roof-trees".

Fisher Row is, moreover, a case-study in mobility and stability. West Oxford, had, then as now, a considerable vagrant population, originally attracted to Oxford by monastic hospitality and then by student generosity; but while the beggars and "travelling women" came and went, the fishermen, bargemen and canal boatmen stayed in the Row, mostly marrying into each other's families, and even keeping their distance from the town's other waterside community at Folly Bridge, which housed the rather grander bargemen who took their craft down the lower reaches, to London.

The Row might have lost its identity at the end of the eighteenth century if it had not been for the building, just then, of the Oxford Canal, which had its terminal basin a few yards from the Row, where Nutfield College now stands. The canal narrow-boats kept the Row alive for another century. As late as 1910 it still housed such characters as Abel Beesley, fisherman and waterman, who once raced his boat against a steam launch and won by a hundred yards. But in the end the canal faded away, the railway and bus stations became the dominant features of the landscape in which Fisher Row is set, and the Row itself is now largely gone. One of the houses that does remain is the base of Oxford's archaeological unit - appropriately enough, for as Dr Prior shows, the Row is as exciting a dig as any prehistoric site.

Oxford and Oxfordshire edited by Antonia Fraser (830p. Secker and Warburg. £5.50. 0 436 16260 1) is one of the first in a new series of regional poetry anthologies. *In Verse*, under the general editorship of Emma Tennant,

Fifty years on . . .

The TLS of May 12, 1932, carried the following review by D. L. Murray of *Bath* by Edith Sitwell:

One ought not perhaps to linger too long over the picture-cover of a book; but the very agreeable drawing that envelopes Miss Sitwell's essay on eighteenth-century Bath, displaying a fanciful portrait of the author as a Muse or goddess seated upon plump clouds above the city spires with Berninesque cherubs fluttering around, provokes reflection. And when the book has been read we are tempted to go again to the cover and to say that it is both a description and criticism.

For the cover is unashamedly baroque and the book is baroque too. It reminds us a little of those sumptuous stage productions now in fashion in which we are apt to lose sight of the outlines of the drama in a shifting whirl of magnificent pageantry and sometimes feel confused about the exact historical period through which we are supposed to be moving. Not that we charge Miss Sitwell with chronological inexactitude; she lets us have perfectly fair warning that in summing up ghosts to tread the stones of Bath for her masque she is not going to be tied down to an exact date - "What does it matter in two hundred years if the clock has struck 1709 or 1739?" It does not matter at all; but what does perturb us is the question whether we have here the spirit of the real Bath of Beau Nash. The temptation to romanticize the city of beautiful streets and beautiful clothes is, no doubt, strong. The greater interpreters certainly did not yield to it: the Bath of Sheridan, of Jane Austen, of Pickwick is gay or absurd, but not romantic.

The fact is that Bath is recalcitrant. Nash was the great killjoy of Bath. He waged sententious warfare on riding-boots, spurs, swords, duels, late hours, crooked lanes, saucy varlets who brandished their chair-poles in the wigs of the quality, John Wesley, and his sermons - in fact the whole paraphernalia of the romantic eighteenth century.

ATTENTION ALL WRITERS!

The Bodley Head and Transworld Publishers (Corgi Books) invite entries for their annual prize of £2,000 in memory of George Bernard Shaw for an outstanding full-length novel set in any historical period. Guaranteed hardback and paperback publication. For further details please write to:

The Bodley Head, 9 Bow Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 7AL or Transworld Publishers Ltd., Century House, 61-63 Uxbridge Road, Ealing W6 6SA.

Among this week's contributors

JOHN C. ALDERSON is Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall. He is the author of *Policing Freedom*, 1979.

WILLIAM BOYD's novel *A Good Man in Africa*, 1981, has recently been reissued by Penguin.

W. R. BRACK is a Fellow of Selwyn College, Cambridge and the author of *The Evolution of American Democracy*, 1970.

HENRY CHADWICK is Regius Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge.

OWEN CHADWICK's most recent book is *The Popes and European Revolution*, 1981.

PETER CONRAD's books include *The Victorian Treasure House*, 1973.

B. F. COOK is Keeper of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum.

NEIL CONCORAN is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Sheffield. His study of David Jones, *The Song of Deeds*, will be published later this year.

ANTHONY DRIUS's most recent book is the South African historical novel *Border*.

ERIK DE MAJNY was BBC correspondent in Moscow from 1963 to 1966 and from 1972 to 1974.

K. H. D. HALEY, is Professor of Modern History at the University of Sheffield.

ROBERT HEWISON's *Irreverence, Scurrility, Profanity, Vilification and Licentious Abuse: Monks Python, the Case Against* was published in 1981.

HAROLD HOBSON is an Honorary Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford.

ANTHONY HOLDEN is the author of *The St Albans Poisoner: The Life and Crimes of Graham Young*, 1975.

J. L. HOULDS is a lecturer in New Testament Studies at King's College, London.

OLWEN HUFTON is the author of *The Poor of Eighteenth-Century France, 1750-1789*, 1975.

G. L. HUXLEY is Secretary for Polite Literature and Antiquities of the Royal Irish Academy and President-elect of the 1984 International Congress of Classical Studies.

JAMES JOLL's books include *Gramsci*, 1977.

JAMES KIRKUP's *Dangonban Messages* was published this year.

ERIC KORN is an antiquarian bookseller in London.

ADAM MARKS-JONES's collection of stories *Lantern Lectures* was published last year.

Author, Author

Competition No 70
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than June 4. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers to be opened, or failing that, the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, Times Literary Supplement, PO Box 7, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8BZ. The solution and results will appear on June 11.

1 When tobacco came, when Raleigh did first bring the unfabled herb, the plant of peace, the know-it-all Of comfort brings, then indeed new hope Came to the host of poets.

2 I could say what I know of the virtue of it, for the expulsion of rheums, raw humours, crudities, obstructions, with a thousand of this kind; but I profess myself no quack-salver. Only thus much, by Hercules, I do hold it, and will affirm it, before any Prince in Europe, to be the most sovereign, and precious weed, that ever the earth tendered to the use of man.

3 Browning does not smoke; it is his greatest defect - but he tells me that Tennyson does excessively - and that after he got to Florence on his way to Rome, he was so disgusted because he could not find a particular tobacco he liked that he turned back to England and never went to Rome.

Competition No 66
Winner: Mr L. J. Baggie
Answers:

1 Sir John Suokling invented the game of Cribbage. He sent his Cards to all Gaming places in the country, which were marked with private marks of his; he got twenty thousand pounds by this way.
John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*.

2 We see-we cannot play at chess but that we must give names to our chessmen; and yet methinks, he were a very partial champion of truth that would say we lied for giving a piece of wood the reverend title of a bishop.
Sir Philip Sidney, *Apology for Poetry*.

3 Whist, sir, said Mr Perry, you know, was a court game originally and the knave; I suppose, signified always the prime minister.
Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*.

مكتبة الأصل

Before the Trek

By Roger Owen

ANDRÉ BRINK:
A Chain of Voices
525pp. Faber, £7.95.
0 591 11874 7

André Brink is an Afrikaner and a dissident, a man passionately opposed to the apartheid system; a courageous and honourable combination which is still sufficiently unusual to arouse excitement and, in some cases, to unhinge judgment. He has suggested (in an article in *Index on Censorship*) that writers in open societies, where anything goes, are tempted to "gimmickry", "self-indulgence" and "striving after effect". A *Chain of Voices*, Mr Brink's very ambitious work in what might be called the tragicomic, historical, allegorical mode, demonstrates some other truths. First, that those temptations are universal. Second, that an invigorating climate of repression does of itself, provide immunity to them.

The novel is set on a Boer farm in the Cape Colony during the pre-Trek 1820s. The British now rule from the Cape Town and a wind of change is blowing. Among the up-country Boers there is much resentment, while their slaves, hearing rumours of emancipation, are restless. A small-scale revolt takes place, with murder and other confused and lurid mayhem, and is suppressed with brutality. "But the fire," the main part of the narrative broodingly concludes, "the fire remains."

The "voices" of the title are those of characters who themselves carry the narrative and its cargo of messages. These monologues are "inter-

cut" in the manner of certain portentous radio features. That famous South African landscape is yet again impregnated with significance; there is much local colour and a torrent of historical exotica. There is little sense, though, of the otherness of the past. Some of the musings of these simple Boers are couched in the language of magazine psychology - they are to be found "compensating" or wondering whether they can "adapt" or trying to "prove things to themselves". The monologues tend to conclude on reverberatingly "symbolic" times, for example: "The jackals will be howling again tonight!"

The characters are plainly intended as archetypes. There is Galant, the slave who leads the rising, who is Humankind itself. "Galant has many fathers. No one is his father and everybody is..." There is Ma Rose, ancient crone, Chorus, and repository of old Africa's secret wisdom ("My body is deep"). There is the *baas*, archetypically named Van der Merwe. He is a guilt-ridden Calvinist bound in a love-hate relationship with Galant, erstwhile friend of his childhood. The voices face strong competition from the bustling noises made by the author as he strains to point up the contemporary significances of his tale.

The novel reveals some intractable features of Afrikaans culture: fierce moral categories; a heroic interest in black sexuality; a strong sense of destiny and mission. The Old Testament too exercises a baleful influence on a prose style which goes, regardless of cost, for sonority. Indeed the allegory itself seems to be provided by the author as a kind of Word, inviting exegesis and intended to give guidance to the South Africans in their present trials.

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digest the systems it purports to reject. Sugar aristocrats nose their Cadillacs through the Prado, village bands crash into the triumphal march from *Aida* and zombie charms fill the counters of Woolworths. Yet "at one level this is a very African scene". The characters are marked by the imagery of hunting, fishing - and voodoo. Stilson's mesmerizing power comes from a silver medal round his neck, etched with the head of a slave ancestor. When he spins it, the victims feel giddy and tell the truth in piping voices. Even after his death, the image of St Barbara, with her pink cheeks and doll's painted mouth, jumps out everywhere. The magistrate who condemns Dick and the doctor who tries to seduce him are described in her terms. The trouble is that the author tends to make effigies of all his characters. Granted that British diplomats are sitting ducks for the novelist, it is hard to credit embassy officials with a willingness to swap Dick's release for a UK visa on the passport of a man who controls the world trade in narcotics. Mrs Frazer, "a Guardian reader, interested in Third World problems", remains untouched by her lover's demise: "Her long ordeal had left no trace whatever on her face; her eyes are equally static. From the start, Dick is too dismaying and mature a teenager to be effective as a jealous adolescent. He carefully plots a murder and is untroubled when punished for it."

In his travels through Cambodia and Laos, as recounted in that excellent book, *A Dragon Apparent*, Norman Lewis was dealing with a cast which presented and arranged itself without him. The major flaw in *Cubani Passage* is a lack of focus. In choosing to write about a corrupt régime, an insurrection against it and an expatriate community caught in the cross-fire, he needs a less dilettante character than Dick as go-between. The confusion is reflected in the prose: "Dick and Jerry mingled themselves into the gardens, where Jerry resisted the overtures of a homosexual guest, and then was half-strangled by him until Dick beat the man over the head with his box." As in the novel, it is unclear who is the real hero.

Norman Lewis is as skilful a painter as he is a shifter of scenes, from the briny wharves and sombre courtroom to the outlying cane-fields. He succeeds in catching, with all its colours and cigar smell, a jaunty, hip-swinging society which has half-

A characteristic episode is one involving a stallion. This beast appears early but by then we have read enough to suspect that it will carry a weight somewhat heavier than is usual even for literary stallions. And so it does. The horse is a present from old Piet to one of his sons. But who is to break it in? Unsurprisingly, the two white boys fail, and it is Galant's turn. He, we know, has an intuitive affinity with animals (a notion with some not obviously liberal resonances, this) and so succeeds. His reflections follow. The horse he thinks "is a wild creature meant for wild and mountain, not for yard and stable". How can it allow itself to be "broken in so shamefully?" And finally, "it is as if something had died inside me". The episode is over, but lest its drift is lost on us we get, a few pages later, some assistance in the form of a comment on Galant's character from an old slave. "There's no remedy for Galant's sort," he ponders, "they belong to a breed of horse that refuses to be broken."

The reader is being slobbered - and by what? By an image without substance, and which, followed through, misleads - diminishing what it intends to enlarge. "If a writer," really serious about his trade, probes and examines even politics in such a way that it becomes valid as aesthetic experience". How much "probing", one asks, has gone into this equation of human freedom with galloping stallions?

Much praise has been bestowed on the author. The indignities to non-whites which he catalogues are of course real, as is the viciousness of the system he condemns. So too were the brutalities portrayed, say, in the television serial *Roois*, which in atmosphere and quality (its craftsmanship was superior) is similar to this. The book at times is inevitably moving. But only a vague sense of the awesomeness of the subject-matter, and a comfortable feeling of political agreement could conceal from the reader some glaring "aesthetic" faults - derivatives; a propensity to cliché; a striving for "fine" writing; a certain woodenness of style. It seems to me that these faults are not to be dismissed as trivialities - they throw some doubt on the author's sense of what is really the case in the South African experience.

In the salon

By Anne Duchêne

ELIZABETH JANE HOWARD:
Getting It Right
264pp. Hamish Hamilton, £7.95.
0 241 10805 5

How the Modest Hairdresser is Deceived by a Millionaire, becomes involved with a Member of a Superior Class, and Finally Learns that Love was All the Time to be Found in the Cubicle at Work. Some rather maudlin modern Moll Flanders? The newest packaged product, hot from the conveyor-belt? Alas, no: an outline of Elizabeth Jane Howard's new and, as her publishers say, "long-awaited" novel, which seems to have been written under some odd and regrettable compulsions towards up-to-datelessness, from which she should feel herself honourably absolved.

Her timid virgin hairdresser is male, slightly improbably aged thirty-one, a victim of acne and balding, living at home in New Barnet with his parents, his records, his poetry books, and his fantasies about women. At the book's outset, he goes to a party in Knightsbridge where some homosexuals he knows (introduced, one imagines, to allow the statutory glimpse into their menage later on), and is bedded, with ecstatic success, by the rich hostess. He also meets there a poor little liberated wreck of a contemporary vicar, called Minerva, a rather old-fashioned Howard touch, who travels with a parrot in her Mini; and their relations remain quite au-

Plain invention

By Adam Mars-Jones

BERNARD MAC LAVERTY:
A Time to Dance
and Other Stories
174pp. Jonathan Cape, £6.50.
0 224 02018 8

Bernard Mac Laverty came to notice with the novel *Lamb*, but his first book was a volume of short stories, and this second collection shows few signs of uncertainty or amateurism. Its title, though, is misleadingly pompous and elegiac; pregnant with biblical reference, it conveys a bogus repose which has nothing in common with these lively and varied stories.

The book, admittedly, takes a little time to get under way. If you call a story about blocked affection and mutual misunderstanding "Father and Son", and set it in a strife-torn Ireland, you are issuing an open invitation to cliché; the resulting tale is likely to be inferior in all respects to the original notebook-entry "Father and Son". Blocked affection, mutual misunderstanding. Strife-torn Ireland.

But with the first sentence of the second story, "A Time to Dance", things take a turn for the better: "Nelson, with a patch over one eye, stood looking idly into Mothercare's window". Already in the absurd tension between the proper nouns there is more literary excitement than in all six worthy pages of "Father and Son".

Mothercare is only Mothercare, but Nelson turns out to be the name of a schoolboy playing truant; to the mother had called him Nelson because, she said, she thought that his father had been a seafaring man. This explanation of Nelson's naming provides the seed of the whole story, which reveals how Mrs Skelly comes into such casual contact with seafaring folk, usually of a rank rather lower than admiral.

The book contains little that is strikingly new on the level of plot; there is adolescent trauma, there is mature adjustment, and there is senescent defeat. But luckily the short story as a form thrives on transformations of the familiar; only minor miracles of phrasing and point of view are called for, and one suc-

cessful device is enough to ensure the quality of a story.

So "My Dear Palestrina" suddenly becomes an excellent piece of work by virtue of a single understated effect:

"I practised it - all week end", he said. "Oh Danny", Miss Schwartz let a gasp out of her. "Say that again."

"I practised it all week end."

The typographical hiccup beautifully enacts the change taking place in Danny, a change which isn't recognized until it is named by someone else: "Danny, your voice is breaking".

This is the turning-point in Danny's development; he forfeits the innocent rapport he has had with Miss Schwartz his piano teacher, and must eventually return to the narrow confines of his family. But his progress depends for its poignancy on the vividness of individual phrases.

The stories are set in Ireland or in Scotland (respectively the countries of Mr Mac Laverty's origin and adoption), and the statutory dialects figure largely in the dialogue: "you're mad in the skull" a character may say, or "that puts the heart sideways in me". But more evident in the narrative voice is an educated Irish tradition of inventive precision (represented for instance by Stephen Dealus's saying "fandish" for "funnel"), which often extends the usage of a common word, playing with the parts of speech without any sacrifice of clarity; so an old man "knuckles" the corners of his eyes clean in the morning ("No Joke"), and a cushion smells "of cloth and human" to the boy who kneels against it for his prayers ("The Beginnings of a Sin").

These little alertnesses of language make all the difference to the volume, and the general excellence of the writing draws attention away from the occasional lapse (the thumping last sentence of "The Daily Woman" and the occasional intrusive symbol (the squirming eponyms of "Eels").

A *Time to Dance* is a more than promising collection by a writer with a real affinity for the short story form. He has yet to write a story that cries out for instant inclusion in anthologies or commitment to memory; but he is well on the way.

honoured comic stock, but sound comic, observed here with what may well be old-fashioned bourgeois realism but which still makes one laugh.

Laughter, then, happily, is not yet something Miss Howard has renounced. The portraits of all the women are also painted with a full and confident brush, very humanely; they all seem very likeable and intelligent women. (There are also some very small, flawlessly enigmatised portraits of the trainee's little boy.) The trouble is that the interesting women are only interpolated among all Gavin's self-communings, which are wan and uninteresting. The rich seducer, a particularly kind, clever, lonely, large lady, is dismissed after a few paragraphs; Minerva is left as an impossible, which she is, but after spending so much time on her it seems a waste; the trainee only comes into focus at the very end. Most of the time, we are stuck with Gavin, and too often with loyally dull details about back-combing and back-biting in the dreary salon.

The choice of this as a setting may itself suggest a rather desperate casting about for a known ground. A sadder error seems to be the author's supposing, for whatever reasons, that she should abjure all particular gifts: a steady gaze at her own relationships, a prose that at times has the texture and sheen of some luxurious fabric. Perhaps, even, these seem to her naughtily self-indulgent, frivolous gifts, now-days, and once a serious novelist must eschew. But how much better it would be to admit to obsolescent opulence, and allow other people to share it.

Independence and accommodation

By J. R. Pole

RICHARD R. JOHNSON:
Adjustment to Empire
The New England Colonies 1675-1715
270pp. Leicester University Press, £22.
0 7185 1208 1

When Edward Randolph landed in Boston in 1676 bearing a commission from the king, he lost no time in summoning the colonial council. Before reading aloud the royal proclamation he properly removed his hat. In this gesture he was followed by three members of the council; but the governor with four other members remained covered. This incident - which must be one of very few not mentioned in Richard Johnson's account of the relationship of New England to the English nation in this decisive period - exemplifies two principal themes. One is the question of autonomy asserted by the leaders of Massachusetts on almost every public occasion: the other is the incipient split between those who were prepared symbolically to deny the king's presence and those who, for reasons of religious dissent or mercantile interest, were willing to accommodate.

If the English government had been in the habit of thinking more consistently about colonial affairs it might have seen possible advantages in this division. But in fact of many provocations it moved only with slow and inconsistent steps. Dr Johnson disagrees with those who have seen the later Stuart's elaborating a long-term grand design to make the Empire conform to their plans for absolutism at home. The sources of the Dominion of New England are to be found not in the 1670s but in renewed Stuart confidence after the failure of exclusion. It was the intemperances of Massachusetts that brought on the final destruction of the charter.

On the whole Johnson plays down the sectarian divisions within Massachusetts until reaching the rising against Sir Edmund Andros, when they suddenly acquire a significance for which we are not fully prepared. Even the hated Dominion had influential friends within the colony. Moreover the Dominion's structure gave the governor certain tactical advantages: Rhode Islanders on his council had no affection for the former Congregationalist establishment in Massachusetts. Johnson thinks that when Andros set out to put all land titles on a new basis, he did not mean thereby to effect a redistribution of landed property. But he certainly caused landowners to fear for their security. One of his errors was the crude rigour with which he carried out his instructions. It was not by breaking the law so much as by brutally bad diplomacy and mismanagement that he united so much of the province against him. We are left with the inference that a more skilful Dominion could have made the Revolution, which would have had profound consequences for Anglo-American history. J. R. Western pointed out that William's first inclination, on the privy council's advice, was to leave the Dominion intact. The Revolution had no necessary consequences for America. Its consequences had to be extracted from the very confusing political scene in London after the accession of William and Mary.

Johnson therefore proceeds to a very detailed, but impeccably clear account of Increase Mather's prolonged negotiations with various English authorities - not excluding four influential ladies about the crown - the of James. Then, he swung to support a bill to restore all charters that had been struck down since 1689, and helped to draft it to include those of the colonies. But these debates served to inform William that the colonies were among his possessions, and he dissolved parliament without letting the bill pass. Then, turned his attention back to the court, from which a new

charter was about to proceed. The man who had once told Massachusetts not to make any concession to the crown, and who had arrived in England expecting to be treated as an emissary of a semi-independent state, was now told that the colony's consent "was neither expected nor desired".

Yet he had gained more than at this stage he might have dared to hope - and more, probably, than any of his countrymen could have got. Johnson is right to call this the most notable of colonial agencies. Representative government was restored with a large measure of home rule. Mather saw the vital importance of accepting this charter; he was by this time a sadder but a very much wiser man.

Elisha Cooke, more an irritant than a colleague, never fully accepted this necessity. And Mather's difficulties once he returned to urge the charter of 1691 on his countrymen raise the more general question of the nature of opposition in New England. Connections with earlier, political alignments might here have been more closely ex-

amined; and if they did not stand up to examination then it would be arguable that in spite of the subsequent appearance of continuity, the Revolution in New England actually represented a more profound rupture with the past than has usually been thought.

Johnson notes that in the early eighteenth century a growing scepticism towards authority made opposition respectable. With the growth of new interests and deeper settlements he discerns deepening cultural differences between coast and hinterland, adding to existing political animosities between the port towns and the back-country. But at some risk of contradiction he later denies that the differences between "court" and "country" in Massachusetts depended on this distinction between coast and back-country. Two political cultures were emerging, "one local and the other provincial, one predominantly egalitarian and consensual in its social and political beliefs and the other placing a greater emphasis upon the need for hierarchy and deference to one's superiors".

Ten years after the close of John-

son's period, no fewer than thirty-two members of the Massachusetts House of Representatives voted against accepting the Explanatory Charter that had been sent out by the privy council. Since all Boston's four members voted with this minority, this remarkable demonstration of opposition mentality must have emanated from something more than back-country hostility or an "egalitarian consensual culture". There was a widespread and endemic opposition mentality which seems periodically to have affected assembly leadership.

Royal government was the irreducible structure to which Massachusetts politicians had to conform. Johnson observes that royal government preserved and accentuated a division of function in government that was becoming obsolete in England, and thus preserved the separation of powers. Meanwhile the new charter was becoming encapsulated within the mythology of the old. This mythology assimilated New England's revolt to the larger aims and achievements of the Glorious Revolution, at the cost of leaving understandable ambiguities for the

role of parliament. The colonists' allegiance, as Johnson shrewdly observes, was always to English constitutionalism rather than to the crown.

But what was English constitutionalism, and who was its arbiter? The question lies largely outside this book's scope, though interesting traces of material for an answer can be found here. The author's main conclusion is that New England's "Adjustment to Empire" was a generally satisfactory solution to its real needs in the eighteenth century; it lasted until new problems and policies arose to alter the entire balance of the relationship.

To complete the picture it could be pointed out that this was a largely mutual adjustment, into which Britain entered to her own advantage. Even more than in the previous century, the colonies were essential elements of the British nation. Neither can be properly understood in its historical context without the other. To that understanding Dr Johnson's comprehensive book makes a studious, carefully reasoned and thoroughly intelligible contribution.

A touch of the exotic

By Nicholas Shakespeare

NORMAN LEWIS:
Cubani Passage
250pp. Collins, £7.50.
0 00 222620 0

In his travel books and novels, Norman Lewis has thrived on old-civilization being put to the sword. From Cambodia to Columbia, the cut and thrust of civil war and colonial busy-boddy have provided material to make him, in V. S. Pritchett's eyes, "one of the very few capable experts in the novel of the exotic and revolutionary setting". Unfortunately, (the setting is most often the thing, and in it, Lewis's characters tend to drain of colour.

Cubani Passage is set in 1959, a time when the author was reporting Castro's chances of success for *The Sunday Times*. The novel attempts to match the growth of a teenage boy with Cuba's own turbulent coming of age. Dick Frazer is a gauche fifteen-year-old with a history of dyslexia and juvenile delinquency. When his mother takes a Latin lover, he takes exception to him. Juan Stilson, a powerful ex-hypnotist a man who reeks of black magic and narcotics and his efforts to cultivate Dick with a shrink-fishing trip come to nothing. Having been toughened up on Havana's waterfront by an embryonic rebel called Jerry, Dick determines to kill Stilson during a birthday deer hunt. By hook, by crook but largely by luck, he manages to shoot the man. Then he falls prey to Cuban justice. At the rebel approach, the city and impounded train, surrounded by men on bicycles, Dick chews cockroaches in prison and waits for diplomats to secure his release. His freedom coincides with Batista's downfall in a dramatic, if somewhat unlikely climax.

Norman Lewis is as skilful a painter as he is a shifter of scenes, from the briny wharves and sombre courtroom to the outlying cane-fields. He succeeds in catching, with all its colours and cigar smell, a jaunty, hip-swinging society which has half-

plains the systems it purports to reject. Sugar aristocrats nose their Cadillacs through the Prado, village bands crash into the triumphal march from *Aida* and zombie charms fill the counters of Woolworths. Yet "at one level this is a very African scene". The characters are marked by the imagery of hunting, fishing - and voodoo. Stilson's mesmerizing power comes from a silver medal round his neck, etched with the head of a slave ancestor. When he spins it, the victims feel giddy and tell the truth in piping voices. Even after his death, the image of St Barbara, with her pink cheeks and doll's painted mouth, jumps out everywhere. The magistrate who condemns Dick and the doctor who tries to seduce him are described in her terms. The trouble is that the author tends to make effigies of all his characters. Granted that British diplomats are sitting ducks for the novelist, it is hard to credit embassy officials with a willingness to swap Dick's release for a UK visa on the passport of a man who controls the world trade in narcotics. Mrs Frazer, "a Guardian reader, interested in Third World problems", remains untouched by her lover's demise: "Her long ordeal had left no trace whatever on her face; her eyes are equally static. From the start, Dick is too dismaying and mature a teenager to be effective as a jealous adolescent. He carefully plots a murder and is untroubled when punished for it."

In his travels through Cambodia and Laos, as recounted in that excellent book, *A Dragon Apparent*, Norman Lewis was dealing with a cast which presented and arranged itself without him. The major flaw in *Cubani Passage* is a lack of focus. In choosing to write about a corrupt régime, an insurrection against it and an expatriate community caught in the cross-fire, he needs a less dilettante character than Dick as go-between. The confusion is reflected in the prose: "Dick and Jerry mingled themselves into the gardens, where Jerry resisted the overtures of a homosexual guest, and then was half-strangled by him until Dick beat the man over the head with his box." As in the novel, it is unclear who is the real hero.

Norman Lewis is as skilful a painter as he is a shifter of scenes, from the briny wharves and sombre courtroom to the outlying cane-fields. He succeeds in catching, with all its colours and cigar smell, a jaunty, hip-swinging society which has half-

Radicalism and compromise

By W. R. Brock

ERIC FONER:
Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War
250pp. Oxford University Press, £11.50.
0 19 502781 7

Many scholars must ask themselves whether to reprint articles and other short pieces in a single volume. Eric Foner has brought together seven previously published pieces, added an introduction, and given the collection a comprehensive title. The first justification is accessibility, for some of the articles appeared in journals that are not found outside large libraries. The second justification, quoted from his mentor, Richard H. Stoddard, is that such a collection is "unified by some underlying intellectual intent... a set of related concerns and methods". The first of these concerns is to place politics and ideas, once more at the centre of historical inquiry. Whether this concern is reactionary or dynamic depends upon one's assessment of what so many American historians have been doing during the past decade. As Foner explains.

In place of conventional narratives of political and intellectual development, American historiography now produced an abundance of works in various sub-fields of social investigation; family history,

ethnic history, labour history, the histories of sexuality, criminality, and childhood... As historians intruded into the intimate lives of past generations of Americans, public events and institutions receded into the background.

A glance through the programme of any major American historical conference held during the past three years will confirm this diagnosis. The hypothetical "traditional historian", waking from a twenty-year sleep, would find hardly one session dealing with the problems to which he had devoted his scholarly life. He would find himself in emphatic agreement with Foner's observation that "the broadening of historians' concerns went hand in hand with a narrowing of their vision and the result was often specialist, even trivial, inquiries. American society was divided and subdivided so completely that the ideal of re-creating history as a lived experience seemed more remote than ever."

The new history, has, of course, added great depth to historical scholarship, and its insistence that ideas were by definition unrepresentative is a salutary warning to anyone who tries to understand the small number of men who make policies. Yet catastrophe cannot be understood by reading the annals of minorities; if the new social history has brought an awareness of long-standing continuities, it is singularly inept at handling discontinuity. This is a limitation which must irritate a historian such as Foner, whose instincts and sympathies are all with men and

women who have wanted to change the world.

This is the underlying concern of the essays, but there is a further and more important development. Radical ideas wither away unless they can widen their appeal, draw in moderate and even apathetic men, and organize for action. This was the lesson of his path-breaking study of the early Republican party, *Free Soil, Free Labour, and Free Men*. Once a radical thinker begins this transformation he must work in harness with others whose convictions are weak or even hostile to the radical cause. This gives contemporaries plenty of ammunition, for a reformer who seems to compromise is always the most vulnerable of men. Modern American historians have been all too ready to reduce this line of demarcation. The Abolitionists came from a frustrated élite, and, because some hesitated in pressing for unequivocal equality, they were racists at heart. Free Soilers included men who did not want blacks in the West, whether they were slave or free. Radical Republicans shared some ideas with aggressive capitalist entrepreneurs. Reformers of all kinds were élitist, and attempted to impose middle-class values upon society. Too many modern American historians tend to ease only when they study failure, for as soon as they confront success, they must also take complexity into account.

A critique of this approach is implicit in all these essays. "Abolitionism and the Labour Movement" admits that some abolitionists, notably Garrison, were very unsympathetic to labour agitation; but this does not mean that all abolitionists were social conservatives; nor does it mean that working men were unmoved by anti-slavery. What it does mean is that abolitionists cannot be separated from their times. "It will not do to defang the abolitionist crusade: it was indeed a radical impulse, challenging fundamental aspects of American life... But the view of economic relations it did espouse, the language of northern society." Some Free Soilers were "racist", but the movement as a whole was a significant step towards the future: it identified the "slave power" as the enemy of poor men everywhere, and helped to formulate the ideology of free labour - which may look middle-class to some modern commentators but was a not ignoble view of human betterment.

The attempt to introduce the system of free labour in the South after the war necessarily meant preaching to freed slaves the virtues of regularity, thrift, hard work, temperance, education, observance of contracts, and willingness to give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. In some cases it meant co-opting the officials of the Freedmen's Bureau appearing to side with employers. Yet even those who had most reason to com-

plain of the new system of wage labour agreed that it was immeasurably better than slavery.

This gives point to Foner's essay on Thaddeus Stevens. In nineteenth-century terms Stevens was the most consistent of radicals, yet he was also keenly aware of the need to play politics, and, while putting himself ahead of opinion, never advanced so far that he lost touch with the possible. His commitment to land reform - confiscating the land of larger owners and distributing it to ex-slaves - shocked many contemporaries. Yet in the past he had shown uncanny prescience in seeing how opinion would move in a revolutionary situation. There is an implication that if he had not died in 1868 he would have kept up the radical pressure, allowed no easy compromise with the old Southern élite, and brought majority to realize the necessity for land reform. This would, perhaps, have made the South a better place.

The last essay in the book, "The Land Language and Irish-America", sits somewhat awkwardly with the others. It is full of intrinsic interest and, where the other essays re-work familiar material, breaks new ground. The connecting theme is that here, once more, reform movements, though apparently quite separate, found common cause. Irish land reform and the Knights of Labour had, on the surface, nothing in common, yet "where Irish-Americans predominated, the Knights merged social radicalism and Irish nationalism as effectively as the Land League and the Labour Movement". This essay, therefore, is set beside those on the Abolitionists and Free Soil; in all cases men, who were dissatisfied with society as they found it, identified common enemies and made common cause.

A collection of essays necessarily leaves large gaps. The perceptive essay on the causes of the Civil War brings us to the point of secession in the Lower South. It does not tackle two further questions: why did the Upper South secede, and why did the North fight? A part of the answer to the second question is to be found in *Free Soil, Free Labour, and Free Men*, but Douglas Denotrats was also as Republicans rallied to the cause of Union. Without this there would have been no war; merely the allegedly weak, but perhaps statesmanlike stance adopted by Buchanan of refusing to recognize Southern independence but exercising Federal authority only where the people accepted it. If we can obtain a clear idea of why so many responded when Lincoln called for men, we will also be able to grasp more fully what happened to Northern opinion once the fighting began. Perhaps Eric Foner has this problem in mind. The essays in this book promise that his discussion of freedom and reform during the war would be thoughtful, fresh, and illuminating.

My Father and I and Billy Two Rivers

Our favoured wrestler, the Mohawk Indian.

We would sit in the local barber-shop - 'Could he not afford a decent hair-cut?' - To watch him suffer the slings and arrows Of a giant Negro who fought dirty.

The Negro's breath-taking crotch-hold and slam Left all of us out for a count of ten.

The barber knew the whole thing was a sham.

Next week would see Billy back on his feet For one of his withering Tomahawk Chops To a Bangall's crew.

shaking him out Of the ring and into the wide-mouthed crowd Like a chest of tea at the Boston Tea Party.

Paul Muldoon

The current issue of *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France* (March/April 1982) contains sixty-eight previously unpublished Montesquieu letters, dating mainly from 1733-37 and including fourteen from Montesquieu himself. René Pomeau discusses their significance in an introductory article.

Reaching across the half-door

By Neil Corcoran

JOHN HEWITT:

The Selected John Hewitt
Edited by Alan Warner

116pp. £3.50.
0 85640 244 3

Mosale

40pp. £3.50.
0 85640 253 2

Blackstaff Press.

Both Seamus Heaney and John Montague have written critical essays on John Hewitt that testify to his preeminence among Ulster poets of an earlier generation. They do so more generously since the poetry and the poet of the younger men all run towards the Catholic and the Gaelic, whereas Hewitt's are, sometimes anxiously, those of "an Irishman of Planter stock", as he defined himself in the preface to his *Collected Poems* of 1968. But Hewitt's work is imaginatively present to the poets of *North* and *The Rough Field* in a way that the poetry of that other elder Ulsterman, W. R. Rodgers, could not be. For Hewitt's persistent theme is the search for self-definition among conflicting traditions, the desire to locate a cultural and poetic "homestead" where the native land has been eroded by dispossession and colonization. It is the theme that has, by course, been given particular intensity and focus in the newer Northern poetry.

Hewitt's stance towards the common concern is that of an educated, middle-class Belfast Protestant forced, from an early age, to come to terms with the very different way of being Irish that he witnessed in the Catholic peasantry of the Glens of Antrim. His nature poetry frequently celebrates this magnificent tract of land, with its *lure* and *whin*, and his sense of place is informed by Irish history and myth. The first poem in the collected volume is actually called "Ireland" and begins, "We Irish". But the self-doubting honesty of Hewitt's work constantly checks the longed-for ease of that corporate identification. In "O Coun-

try People", of 1950, he addresses the other inhabitants of Antrim:

I would be neighbourly, would come to terms with your existence, but you are so far: there is a wide bog between us, a high wall. I've tried to learn the smaller parts of speech in your slow language, but my thoughts need more flexible shapes to move in, if I am to reach into the hearth's red heart across the half-door.

The poignancy in that, and its humane liberal decency – together with its political context deriving from Hewitt's involvement in the 1940s and 1950s, in a leftist regionalism inherited from Patrick Geddes – are affecting and genuine. It is difficult, however, to read the passage home, without remembering that Heaney has shown us the hideous Janus-face of the word "neighbourly" in his poem "Funeral Rites", where he hears "the news come in / of each neighbourly murder".

In fact, the desire for communion, based on mutual respect and tolerance, is balanced in Hewitt's best work against a clear-eyed, hard-bitten knowledge of the forces in Irish history and in his own psyche which endlessly postpone it. He writes poems on St Patrick and Colmcille, on Ossian and the heroic portraits in the Municipal Gallery, and even a respectfully baffled poem on the Mass; but he knows too how much he "fears their creed as we have always feared / the lifted hand against unfettered thought". (In its original, not printed in Alan Warner's selection, this was stronger: the hand was lifted between the mind and truth.) And "Once Alien Here" and "The Colony" defend the rights of the inheritors of colonial enterprise to enjoy the fruits of generations of labour. "The Colony" is one of Hewitt's most powerful poems. It is perhaps less fettered by a civilized conscience than some of his work, although it does distance itself from direct personal statement by employing a version of the historical monologue perfected by Edwin Muir. At its close, the Roman colonist in the final days of empire is articulating something darker and deeper than we

often find in Hewitt's *propria persona* meditations: for we have rights drawn from the soil and the use, the pace, the patient year of labour, the rain against the lips, the changing light, the heavy clay-sucked stride, have altered us; we would be strangers in the Capitol; this is our country also, no where else; and we shall not be ousted on the world.

The threat implicit in the final line is not heard again in Hewitt's work, although it is possible sometimes to sense the anxiety that is prelude to the threat. More often, the question of territorial rights is muted, subsumed in the neo-Wordsworthian contract which Hewitt enters into with the Antrim glens. These landscape poems seem to me the least interesting of Hewitt's work, with the honest awkwardness which can be a strength elsewhere constantly threatening to collapse into the bathetic. The Frostian man-meets-animal poems – particularly "The Watchers", "The Owl" and "Hedgehog" – are much more rewarding and show the virtues of obliqueness. The badger eventually encountered after much patience in "The Watchers" provokes a quiet, reverential response which is also Hewitt's response, at his best, to the other alien forms his poems confront.

It was as if another nature came close to my knowledge, but would not be known: yet if I tried to call it by its name would start, alarmed, and instantly be gone.

The sense here that naming is a netting and imprisoning of the true reality of things is redeemed from cliché by its Ulster connotations. William Allingham, the nineteenth-century Ulster poet whose work Hewitt has edited, wrote this ex-hausted epigrammatic couplet: "Not men and women in an Irish street / But Catholics and Protestants you meet"; and Hewitt knows how names like that can all too literally drain the life from things.

The poems that recall a sectarian childhood in Belfast are drawn firmly from the nexus of family and class and church, where such harshly simplified names and identities are

generated. Warner prints a large number of these poems, and they are surely at the centre of Hewitt's achievement. One of the best is the poem of the 1940s, "The Green Shoot". It works by attempting to locate particular instances of sectarian prejudice in the young Protestant consciousness, and then moving out from guilt and constraint into a final stanza of extraordinary desire and dream. It is a stanza that releases many of the contained energies of Hewitt's work, as the rational, anatomizing voice, the voice withheld and kept in check, carefully and scrupulously attempting definition, breaks out into a gorgeousness which recalls early Irish lyric.

Out of this much of ready sentiment, grity with threads of finely violence, I am the green shoot asking for the soft as the feathers of the snow's cold swans.

Warner's selection is a very generous one. I would like to have seen more of "Conacre", an important early poem represented here by only a handful of its many lines; and the omission of "My Grandmother's Carriage" and "Eager Journey", two of the strangest and creepiest grandparent poems I know, is also regrettable. I would quarrel too with Warner's odd editorial principle of publishing the poems not in chronological order but in four thematic groupings.

One of the most remarkable things about Hewitt's recent work is its sheer bulk. He has not been a prolific writer, and the 1968 "Collected" was an exceptionally thin one; but since then he has built up a large and varied body of work. It is good to see a poet discovering such fecundity in old age, especially since Hewitt has proved willing to broaden the range of his preoccupations and to develop an interest in forms used only rarely in the earlier work. In particular, he now brings his long experience as a "smiling public man" more to the fore: the poems in the latest volume, *Mosale*, in which he appears as international poet-traveller (in Prague, Moscow, Sicily, Tashkent), as ex-director of a large municipal art-gallery, as connoisseur of Chinese art, help to define the more local and private man of the earlier work. Among his recent met-

rical explorations, the late flowering of sonnets is something to be particularly grateful for.

Not all of Hewitt's attempts to broaden his range in *Mosale* are equally successful, however. There is, sometimes, an over-explanatory descriptiveness and inconsequentiality in the longer poems here; and the longest piece, "The ruins answer", a poem of "philosophical" enquiry and speculation, seems to me, despite some genuinely terrifying stanzas, to be an embarrassingly portentous failure, with its apocalyptic reflections, Victorian advice and vague political alternative. The best of Hewitt in *Mosale* is what it always has been, and he defines it himself in the poem "Style": "a slow measured an / irrevocably plain", put to its best use in evoking and recollecting the Ulster landscape and people, and in such historical vignettes as "The Curfew Tower", a poem which suddenly, towards its close, explodes out of the past into a savage present.

But the irrevocable plainness of Hewitt's speech in *Mosale* does most memorably with the depoliticization of age: the bafflements of wit, the sense of one's own physical absence made overwhelmingly apparent by witnessing a family home demolished; and, especially, the death of wife, of family, of friends. The many poems in the book that deal with death, particularly the "October sonnets", sustain an elegiac, memorial tone while refusing to ignore gross physical indignity. They are poems about dying, not about "death"; and they are without pity or – perhaps even more usually – self-reproach.

It is fitting, then, that one of the best poems in the book, "In stonecutters", achieves a rich, metaphorical articulation that perhaps nods in Heaney's direction. It speaks the plain honest truth as to what is all Hewitt's own: Select the stone. Incise the words. Cautiously marking time of year. Cut deep or shallow as required: let light or shadow emphasize. Define with kerf the viewer's stance. Avoid abstractions large or small. All value judgments flake or split. The lettered stone's the metaphor.

The expanding mind

By Imre Salustinszky

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Salvation of the scum

By Patrick Lindsay Bowles

A. JAMES ARNOLD:

Modernism and Negritude
The Poetry and Poetics of Aimé Césaire

318pp. Harvard University Press. £17.50.
0 674 58057 5

The word "négritude" was coined by Aimé Césaire nearly five decades ago in an article written for *L'Espresso* in 1934 by Césaire, Léopold Senghor and Léon-Gontran Damas. Although the vindication of black culture and black values which that term designated was, and remains, Marxist and revolutionary in orientation, Césaire's own ideological affiliations – he has been mayor of Fort-de-France and deputy for Martinique since 1945, first as a Communist, then as a representative of the Parti Progressiste Martiniquais (PPM) – have not necessarily been those of *négritude*: at Césaire's instigation, the Paris section of the PPM, led by one of his sons, was dissolved a few weeks ago as being too left-leaning. "Pour Césaire", says Senghor, "le 'blanc' symbolise le capital, comme le Nègre le travail".

... A travers les hommes à peau noire... c'est la lutte du prolétariat mondial qu'il chante. Yet at the same time, Césaire has consistently defined *négritude* as "a personal ethic" and a poetics rather than a colour-bound political philosophy. "Je refuse", he said in a 1971 interview, "... de me considérer, au nom de la négritude, le frère de Monsieur François ('Papa Doc') Duvalier, pour ne citer que les morts...". And, to be sure, there are those who have looked upon the revolutionary doctrine of *négritude* as "too revolutionary" enough. "The Beatles", says a disaffected Eldridge Cleaver in *Soul on Ice*, "were on the scene, injecting Negritude by the ton into the whites."

Modernism and *Negritude* is the first volume of a two-volume study, the second of which – "currently in progress" – will deal with Césaire's theatre, which receives only brief attention in Volume One. Chapters

are devoted to each of Césaire's collections of poetry; to the awesome *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, or *Tropiques*, the influential review edited by Césaire from 1941 to 1945. Two introductory chapters of a more general nature discuss, respectively, some of the historical sources for Césaire's formulation of *négritude* – the Harlem Renaissance poets and Oswald Spengler – and his contacts with what is far too broadly referred to as modernism.

Throughout this ambitious study emphasis has been placed, quite appropriately, on the relationships between poetics and ideology, specifically between surrealism and Marxism. Although readings of individual poems or passages are, in general, adequately handled, it must be said that Césaire's difficult *oeuvre* rather too frequently gets the better of A. James Arnold; as, for example, in his non-analysis of an original but straightforward remark of Césaire's concerning Lautréamont, which is simply dismissed, and without explanation, as "curious, to say the least" and "decidedly odd". Elsewhere, Arnold weirdly insists that Bergson is the "unmistakable guarantor" of certain notions in one of Césaire's essays. Referring to Bergsonian philosophy as "the only irrationalist thought the French have officially countenanced in recent times" (insert *sic* after "irrationalist"), "French" and "officially"), Arnold concludes this unnecessary and unconvincing discussion of supposed parallels with the following inspiring summary: "Both the philosopher and the poet... accentuated the mind-expanding tendency of thought". Less serious, but mildly distracting nevertheless, is Arnold's naïveté of tone as, for example, in references to "the legendary Rimbaud", to "that other [sic] great prophet of Irrationalism, Dostoevsky", and, referring to a quite unsurprising influence, "none other than Frobenius". Finally, the lack of a bibliography should be noted, especially since this is the first full-length study of Césaire in English.

Only one other poet in our century – Eliot – has had as privileged a view of European civilization as Aimé Césaire. For like Césaire, Eliot remained at once part of that civilization and outside it, an exile both

from his homeland and from Europe. "Je suis investi", writes Césaire in "Aux écluses du vide", by "l'Europe... cette race féroce." Eliot's elegiac "thousand lost golf balls" are no less thorough a denunciation of a dying Christian culture than the frenzied passages of Césaire's *Cahier*: "Europe tunnel bas d'où s'écoule une rosée de sang". Europe vieux chien Europe calèche à vers.

In a very real sense less religious than Césaire, and far less cosmopolitan, Eliot remained opaque to many of the things going on below and beyond the paraphernalia of civilization, but for Césaire le lynch de la reine c'est le ballet de la science c'est le cot inoubliable. It was a similar intuition which lay behind Rimbaud's "Je quitte l'Europe", behind Paul Klee's "Wie neugeboren will ich sein, nichts wissen von Europa, gar nichts", behind Pasolini's "Africa! Unica mia alternativa." Only the most reactionary and the most radical of poets have been able to show us just how little – and by indirection, how much – a Europe in decline has to offer. Hence, similarly, the influence of Spengler upon the *négritude* movement, or, more strikingly, Senghor's ability to appreciate even so forthright a racist as Gobineau.

"Elle est debout la négraille", concludes one of the most memorable passages in Césaire's *Cahier* ("The nigger scum is on its feet"). When Césaire, Senghor and Damas were students, available discussions of black civilizations tended, with notable exceptions like the books of Maurice Delafosse published during the 1920s, to be nasty, brutish and short. In his *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1950), the pamphlet that was to make Césaire famous throughout the Third World, he cites a typical example from Jules Romain: "La race noire n'a encore donné, ne donnera jamais un Einstein, un Stravinsky, un Gershwin." When the French translation of Frobenius's *Kulturgeschichte Afrikas* appeared in 1926, it provided the young poets with the Archimedean point they needed to help "la négraille" of the world to stand up. For here, in Frobenius, was a white, and therefore authoritative corroboration of their own dark suspicion: "The

idea of the 'barbarous Negro' is a European invention."

And yet, Césaire was one of the first writers to demythologize the notion of the "bon nègre". "Non, nous n'avons jamais été amazons du roi de Dahomey... je veux avouer que nous fumes de tout temps d'assez pitres laveurs de vaisselle." For Césaire knows that to apotheosize the black man is to enslave him anew. The Wild Man, the noble savage, the "bon nègre" becomes the "nigger" or the "prol"; the Androgyne becomes a "faggot"; the Virgin a "slut".

"Toute grande poésie", writes Césaire, "sans jamais renoncer à être humaine, à un très mystérieux moment cesse d'être strictement humaine pour commencer à être véritablement cosmique." And it is the great virtue of surrealism to have rendered explicit, by formulating it, the goal not only of poetry, but of all the human situation, how to achieve an absolute alterity, how to reclaim the *sacré*, whether as ape or as essence. All points of desirousness, whether they be symbolized by the Child, the Savage, the Angel or the Plant, are equidistant from the human self. Beyond the provocation and farce by which it is often de-

fined, surrealism should be considered as a low bow to the asylum, and to the "négraille" of every hue and appellation, or what we may call "la vaisselle".

Even as the surrealist movement may be looked upon as a peak of Western poetic theory, so Césaire represents to a certain extent the culmination of surrealism. In his essay "Orphée noir" (1948), Jean-Paul Sartre says that "en Césaire, la grande tradition surréaliste s'achève, prend son sens définitif et se détruit...". Few of Césaire's contemporaries have explored as profoundly as he the ways of the non-human. If he is especially at home in the vegetable realm – he would seem to believe literally in the "supériorité de l'arbre sur l'Homme" – he is equally fascinated by the angelic: "Pattends l'immense tpe, le soufflet vertigineux qui me sacrera chevalier d'un ordre plutonique".

Twenty years hence, when we have got rid once and for all of the lazy artificiality of linguistic and geographic borders in the teaching of literature, it is Césaire who, with Artaud and Pasolini, may very well figure alongside the Eliot-Fountain Yeats triumvirate that has dominated official poetic culture for more than fifty years.

A Garage in Co. Cork

El reino muerto vive todavía.

— Neruda

Surely you paused at this roadside oasis
In your nomadic youth, and saw the mound
Of never-used cement, the curious faces,
The soft-drink ads and the uneven ground
Rainbowed with oily puddles, where a snail
Had scrawled its slimy, phosphorescent trail.

Like a frontier store-front in an old western,
It might have nothing behind it but this air:
Building materials, fruit boxes, scrap iron,
Dust-laden shrubs and coils of rusty wire.
A cabbage-white fluttering in the sodden
Silence of an untended kitchen garden.

Nirvana! But the cracked panes reveal a dark
Interior echoing with the cries of children.
Here in this quiet corner of Co. Cork
A family ate, slept, and watched the rain
Dance clean and cobalt the exhausted grit
So that the mind shrank from the glare of it.

Where did they go? South Boston? Cricklewood?
Somebody somewhere thinks of this as home,
Remembering the old pumps where they stood,
Antique now, squirting juice into a chrome
Lagonda or a dung-caked tractor while
A cloud swam on a cloud-reflecting tile.

Surely a whitewashed sun-trap at the back
Gave way to henz, wild thyme, and the first few
Shadowy yards of an overgrown cart-track,
Tyres in the branches such as Noah knew –
Beyond, a swoop of mountain where you heard,
Disconsolate in the haze, a single blackbird.

Left to itself, the functional will cast
A death-bed glow of picturesque abandon.
The intact antiquities of the recent past,
Dropped from the retail catalogues, return
To the materials that gave rise to them.
And shine with a late sacramental gleam.

A god who spent the night here once rewarded
Natural courtesy with eternal life –
Changing to petrol pumps, that they be spared
For ever there, an old man and his wife.
The virgin who escaped his dark design
Sanctuary the townland from her prickly shrine.

We might be almost anywhere – T'el-nati,
Iguitos, Bethlehem – wherever the force
Of gravity secures houses and the sun
Selects this fan-blade of the universe
Decelerating while the fates devise.
What outcome for the dawdling galaxies?

But we are in one place and one place only,
One of the milestones of earth-residence.
Unique in each particular, the thin
Peopled hinterland serenely tense
Not in the hope of a resplendent future
But with a sure sense of its intrinsic nature.

Derek Mahon

In international style

By James Kirkup

WONG WAI-MING (Editor):
Modern Poetry: East and West
470pp. Shih-Feng Association, P.O.
Box 34993, King's Road Post Office,
North Point, Hong Kong.

The modest little Hong Kong Chinese magazine *Poetry* (circulation 300) decided to celebrate its hundredth issue – a rare achievement among little magazines – in truly international style. The introduction tells us that this anthology started as a joke, but that when Wong Wai-ming and his fellow editors requested contributions from poets all over the world, the response was astounding. It could have been even more astounding if the editors had relied less on official cultural bodies in soliciting new poems, for Councils and Ministries of Culture are biased in favour of safe, variable, politically reliable Establishment figures, of which there are rather too many in this book – particularly from South America, the Commonwealth and Iron Curtain countries. Nevertheless, the magazine received contributions from ninety-six poets in thirty-four countries, including work by two Nobel laureates, Eugenio Montale and Odysseus Elytis. This alone would make the volume worth buying, for Montale's "La Casa del Dogani" and Elytis's "Seven Nocturnal Heptastichs" belong to their very best work. As with all the non-English-speaking poets in this collection, the poems are printed in the

original language only, with Chinese translation, made sometimes with the collaboration of native speakers. So we have the extraordinary achievement of a single volume of outstanding texts beautifully printed in a wide variety of scripts – Chinese, Korean, *hanja*, Russian, Polish, Greek, Hindi, Hebrew, Hungarian, Czech and Finnish – as well as in more familiar western languages – English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish.

There are some noticeable omissions: no poems in Japanese are included, and the absence of poems from Korea and Hungary, which have many fine modern poets, is regrettable. One would have welcomed some of the Russian exiled and "samizdat" poets, as well as writers officially ignored or disapproved of in the supposedly free west, like Paul Celan and Yevgeny Yevtushenko, many expatriate South American poets now living in the United States and Europe. The large British contingent creates a rather *deja-vu* impression, apart from Lawrence Durrell, whose poems are rarely seen now, the interesting young Robert Mphahnick, and a work of elegant sparseness and enigmatic simplicity by another poet not seen often enough these days, Norman MacCaig. Our "heavies" – Hughes and Heaney – are missing, and there is nothing from the Poet Laureate.

On the whole, it is the Americans who, as usual, seem most at home in international company, possibly because many of them, like Robert Bly and W. S. Merwin, are translators and interpreters of poets. Michael Hamburger is our only equivalent in Britain. James Merrill's beautiful

poem is outstanding in a very accomplished American selection that includes notable work by John Ashbery, Robert Creeley, John Updike, and Theodore Weiss. Beside them, the British seem academic, provincial and plain dull.

Inevitably, there are some disappointments. The two Russians, Delmatovskiy and Yevtushenko, have an all-too-familiar, jaded look. Ireland, that great nest of singing birds, is represented only by a short ancient Irish poem in a translation by Thomas Kinsella. The South American poems (from Argentina, Chile and Peru only) do not inspire confidence. We have only four black poets, of whom Wole Soyinka and Edward Brathwaite are the best known, but are not represented here by their best work. One does not really expect much from modern French poetry, but here the very convenient Pleyre de Mandargues, Pierre Seghers and Philippe Soupault cannot compete with the marvelous *Je d'après* by Henri Michaux on his fellow-artist Zao Wu-ki.

One could wish that there were more courageous international ventures like this one. There have been a number of attempts to produce a truly international magazine, most of them American: *Delac*, *Literature East and West*, *Translation*, *Tot Quarterly*, *Portland Review*, *Books Abroad*, *Bonghe*, *Oscure*, *Modern Poetry in Translation* and the admirable Hungarian *Arany*. Most of these are now dead or dying. This anthology is a unique undertaking, and deserves all the support and encouragement we can give it, both poetical and financial.

The expanding mind

By Imre Salustinszky

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Effects of exile

By Anthony Delius

LENRIE PETERS:

Selected Poetry
43pp. Heinemann £2.75.
0 435 90238 5

MAZISI KUNENE:

Anthem of the Decades
Translated from Zulu by the author
312pp. Heinemann. £3.50.
0 435 90234 2

Of several reactions to exile one is to become critical of the culture left behind, and another is to promote it in the face of the omnipresent pressures of the culture of the place or places of refuge. Each reaction is illustrated by a collection of poems from an African – the first by *Selected Poetry* of Lenrie Peters, a Gambian, and the other by *Anthem of the Decades* translated by Mazisi Kunene from his own original Zulu epic.

Both the poets are professional men of considerable accomplishment. Lenrie Peters came from Gambia by way of Prince of Wales School, Freetown, and Trinity College, Cambridge, to work finally as a surgeon in hospitals at Guildford and Northampton. He later returned to Gambia. His training in scientific method probably broadened his view of African problems as much as did his own personal inclination. An African critic has written that "of all African poets the English expression, he is the least concerned about his country and most concerned about the fate of the continent as a whole". Confem- plating the continent, Peters cries:

Octogenarian breasts at twenty
enthroned in pools of urine
after child birth, whose future
is not theirs to mould...

Sometimes Peters's lack of confidence in unaided man spreads to the human race in general:

Where energy belongs to nature
God help the human creature
When Homo runs the show
God help himself.

Yet in his later poems Peters seems to develop a greater faith in man acting according to, if not national, regional inspiration. He quotes the poet-king as saying, "Know yourself... to save yourself, my African brother." They also celebrate great kings and queens, "brutal and naked, without PhDs". Still later he finds all colours can be beautiful, black, white, yellow and even a mixture of them:

for the golden beauty
the bleached beauty
search among the half-castes
of the world you can know a country
by its women.

Mazisi Kunene's 300-page dihyramb is dedicated to all the women of Africa, especially the renowned Zulu poet's Zulu version.

women, as well as to a couple of goddesses in the African pantheon. *Anthem of the Decades* is an enormously expanded version of the folk-tale which tells how death came to man. God decided that man should be immortal and sent a cheameleon to tell him, then changed his mind and sent a salamander hurrying after to tell man death was to be his lot. In Kunene's retelling of it all the powers of heaven and earth, and even those under the earth, become involved in the race between the dihyramb cheameleon and the speedy salamander. The epic saga more and more under interminable speeches and arguments between gods and goddesses in lines like these:

Yet if man is destroyed, it will be his
desire to die.
For man and the Gods do not suffer
the same fate.

Even though it may seem they too
have been destroyed,
it will only be a temporary aberration.

Kunene, now an Associate Professor at the University of California and a leading member of the South African liberation movement, the African National Congress, grew up listening to the insolent upholders of "White Christian Civilization" who claimed that black people were unable to produce a civilization like their own or of any kind. Possibly after nearly thirty years of enforced exile, Kunene still feels the need to explode that racist absurdity, as well as express his proper pride in the cultural and religious concepts of the Zulus, and has been led into excess of literary judgment. I fear this story, and a singularly unconvincing work must do grave disservice to the poet's Zulu version.

